



**News Illustrated**

**NEWS PLEASE RUSH**

Volume 22, No. 10

SEPT. 28, 2002 • \$3.95

# Punchless in Pennsylvania



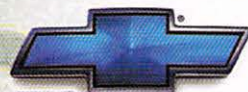
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# Pregame Routine

If you look closely at the photo of Lannie Hopkins blocking a punt on page 22 of the August 2002 issue of Huskers Illustrated, you can see writing on the tape on Hopkins' wrists.

Before each game, the sophomore rover draws a cross on one wrist, with the words "God loves us." Then he writes the names of his parents and three sisters. On the other wrist, he writes the name of his girlfriend, Rachel Baumstark, a sophomore on the Husker volleyball team.

Hopkins began writing on his wrists before football games when he was in high school. It has become routine, a necessary part of his preparation. "Everybody does something," he said.

He also wears the same pair of socks, as long as the team is winning, for luck. That part of the routine would seem to have more significance since he's been at Nebraska. His high school team in Rowlett, Texas, didn't enjoy a lot of success, winning only 11 games in his three seasons.

Hopkins was part of Rowlett High's first graduating class. The school, in a community just northeast of Dallas, opened its doors when he was entering the ninth grade.

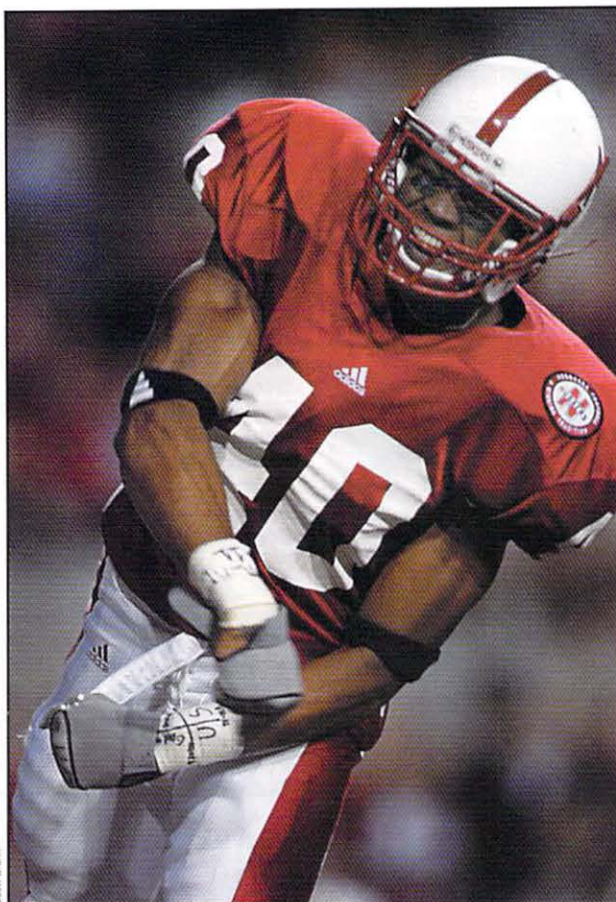
Hopkins was Rowlett High's first major college football player. Former Cornhusker place-kicker Byron Bennett also came from Rowlett, but attended Lakeview Centennial High.

While most of his friends opted for schools with established football programs — nearby Garland High, for example — "with me, the fun was just playing," said Hopkins.

"I didn't care about tradition at all. It's not about tradition for me."

Hopkins didn't play organized football, just the sandlot version, until his ninth-grade year because he was small and, his mom thought, "frail," so she was concerned he would get hurt, he said.

He and his dad finally persuaded



Part of Lannie Hopkins' preparation is writing on the tape on his wrists.

her to allow him to play.

By the spring of his freshman year, he was practicing with the varsity. He was a three-year starter and all-district selection, talented enough that some opposing coaches suggested, indirectly, that he might want to transfer to a school with a more successful football program, i.e. theirs.

Hopkins was surprised when he received his first recruiting letter from Nebraska, and never considered leaving Texas a problem. "You've got to make your mark somewhere," he said. "I got tired of seeing everybody do the same old stuff. I wanted to go out and make my own name."

Soon after he arrived at Nebraska, he struck up a friendship with Willie Amos, who's from Sweetwater, Texas. "I would call Willie my best friend up here," Hopkins said.

"I'd do anything for him. And he'd

do anything for me."

When they first met, however, "I thought, 'Man, this guy's weird,'" said Hopkins. Amos, who is coming back from knee surgery, is quiet, and people "think he's mad about something."

They room with DeWayne Long, a sophomore wingback from West Des Moines, Iowa.

All three are low-key. "We don't go out much . . . to clubs and stuff," Hopkins said.

"That's true," said Amos. "But it's not like we're anti-social."

Hopkins and Amos are always at the back of the pack during the Tunnel Walk before games at Memorial Stadium, again not because they're anti-social but rather because they don't want to get trampled by teammates. "They start going crazy, and I don't want to get caught up in that," Hopkins said.

"They'll be knocking you over, so I let them go ahead. Then I just head out. I want them to do what they want to do, but I don't want to put myself in a position where I get hurt or fall down in front of the crowd. People have

done that. Even Coach Solich got run over one time last year."

Hanging back during the Tunnel Walk was especially important last season. Three games into it, Hopkins was sidelined by a sore left shoulder and athletic pubalgia — because he redshirted as a freshman, he will be able to apply for an additional season of eligibility following his senior year.

While he was sidelined, so was his girlfriend, who is coming off a knee injury this season.

In any case, for obvious reasons, injured players "kind of stagger in the back" for the Tunnel Walk, said Hopkins. The linemen, in particular, can create a hazard for smaller players.

"You sure don't want to get caught with an elbow by them," he said.

Plus, hanging back has become part of his preparation, his pregame routine. ■

## COMING TO PASS?

Even though the Cornhuskers have led the Big 12 in total offense the past two seasons, and scoring offense in 2000, Coach Frank Solich has still had to respond to questions about whether he plans to shift from Nebraska's traditional run-oriented attack to one that is more pass-oriented.

The subject came up again during his weekly teleconference on the Tuesday before the Utah State game. Solich said he doesn't "buy into" the attitude that such a shift is needed.

"I didn't buy into it when we hadn't won a national championship with Tom Osborne (as coach) and the staff we had. I didn't buy into it when we won three national championships with this style of offense," he said. "And I certainly haven't bought into it the last two or three years."

"The idea, I feel, is to move the ball, control the ball, put points on the board. Generally speaking, we've been able to do that with our style of offensive play. People might not like the way we're doing it. They may not like the idea that there's not as much flash involved as what some teams have."

"But we have been a very productive football team from the offensive standpoint. And we hope to continue to be productive as the year goes on."

If he ever reached a point at which such a change in philosophy was necessary, he would hire an offensive coordinator, he said on the Big 12 teleconference the day before.

"I don't think there's any question I'd hire a coordinator, and I'm not saying that if we remain with this style of football that it won't happen down the road," he said.

"In this day and age, certainly, there's an awful lot for a head coach to do. Then when you throw the offensive coordinator position in there also, it just doubles what you need to get done."

Solich has followed Osborne's lead in serving as his own offensive coordinator.

"But I'm leaving all options open there," said Solich. "I'm certainly, at some point in time, going to be open to looking at any option that will make things work for us here as a football program, if that means doing something next year, two years or five years down the road, whatever."

"I'll just try to evaluate things on a yearly basis and try to make sure the moves that I'm making are moves that would be in the best interest of this football program." ■



Frank Solich



Tom Osborne

# QUICK HITS

What's Happening In Nebraska Athletics?

## REMEMBERING 9-11

The nation spent the week before the Penn State game remembering the national tragedy that occurred on Sept. 11, 2001. When the first reports began coming in, Solich said he had just stepped out of a meeting room, across the hall from which was a television set.

"People were starting to buzz around our office area," he said. "People were trying to explain what was happening, and of course, everybody was racing to the TV sets."

They all watched intently for the remainder of the morning.

As with most people, the events of that day were eye opening. "I've always seen myself as a guy that is extremely patriotic and someone that loves their country," said Solich.

"I always felt I understood what the country is all about. But when something happens like happened on 9-11, it shakes everybody for a period of time. Then what it does is bring you back to the point of how great a country this is and how very fortunate we are to live in it."

"To me, that was just a great reminder of what this country is all about and kind of reinforces that you really want to do everything you can to help everybody you can in terms of this country."



Aaron Golliday

## ENVOIOUS LINEMEN

Even though his opportunities to catch passes have been limited, Nebraska's offensive linemen are envious of those opportunities, senior tight end Aaron Golliday said recently.

In fact, it might go beyond that. "A lot of linemen are jealous of me because I'm so heavy," he said with a smile. "They'd love to have the opportunity I get every down to go out and catch passes."

The 6-foot-4 Golliday weighs about 290 pounds.

Golliday envisioned himself as a receiver when he arrived at Nebraska. "I never imagined I would weigh 290 and be a blocking tight end," he said. "But when you're here for a week, you find out real fast that there's not a lot of pass catching positions for tight ends."

You don't have to be a genius to find that out, now when "the first practice is an hour and a half of running plays and then you get 10 or 15 minutes of pass plays," he said.

## TWO OUT OF THREE AIN'T BAD

Solich constantly emphasizes the importance of special teams play, pointing out that it is one-third of the game. "If you're an offensive team that struggles some, and your defense is playing well and your special teams are playing well, if you have two out of three, you still have a chance," he said.

However, "when you have one of the three, you're in trouble."

Ideally, of course, the object is to be strong in all three, he added.

## HALL OF FAME HONOREES

Nine former Cornhuskers and former Nebraska coach Bill Glassford were among those inducted into the Nebraska Football Hall of Fame on the Friday night before the Troy State game.

The players inducted were: Kelvin Clark (1976-78), Tim H. Corey (1914-16), Eric Crouch (1998-2001), Doug Glaser (1987-89), Jim McCord (1965-67), John McCormick (1985-87), Randy Schleusener (1978-80), Lynn Senkbeil (1964-66) and John Westover (1897-1902).

Glassford was Nebraska's head coach from 1949 to 1955.

## HISTORICAL EXHIBIT

Cornhusker football history is the stuff of legends. And some of those legendary moments are replayed in the exhibit "Tales of the Cornhuskers," on display in the University of Nebraska Archives and Special Collections in Love Library, 13th and R streets, until Dec. 31.

This exhibit features programs, photographs, mementos, posters and other materials held by University Archives. The name of the exhibit is taken from the official masthead of Nebraska football programs printed from 1927 to 1942.

"Tales of the Cornhuskers" is located in Archives and Special Collections, Room 29, in the basement of Love Library. Hours of the exhibit are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Some materials will also be displayed on the second floor of Love Library South, and are available for viewing during regular hours, Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-midnight; Friday, 8 a.m.-8 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, noon-midnight. For more information, call (402) 472-2531. ■

# Special Moment

**Ross keeps celebration low-key after first touchdown as a Husker**



**Mike BABCOCK**

CORY ROSS HAS MADE the most of an unexpected opportunity. With Thunder Collins suspended, the redshirted freshman from Denver has become the first I-back off the bench. And his instincts as a ball carrier along with his size — 5-foot-6 and 205 pounds — have made him a fan favorite.

The instincts attracted Nebraska's recruiting interest, and the size wasn't reason enough to ignore him. "Cory is a very tough player for us," Coach Frank Solich said. "He will stand in there."

Ross won't stand in there for long if he has the ball, however, as evidenced on his second carry as a Cornhusker. Late in the fourth quarter of the Arizona State game, he took a pitchout from back-up quarterback Mike Stuntz and ran 34 yards, untouched, for a touchdown.

As he crossed the goal line, he dropped the ball and looked for the nearest teammate.

"When it happened, my first thought was, 'Don't get a flag after the touchdown,'" said Ross. "In high school I used to always dance, do something (to celebrate), and catch a flag."

"I know how the coaches here stress not doing things like that."

He could have done lots of dancing in high school, rushing for 23 touchdowns, and 1,543 yards, as a senior. But he restrained himself that night against Arizona State, limiting his celebration to jumping on the biggest lineman he could find. "I don't know what lineman it was," he said.

"It might have been a tight end. But it was somebody big."

Immediately after the game, he called home to talk to his dad.

Roger Ross, who had watched on television, "was screaming," Cory said.

"He never screams. I remember in high school, I'd have a good play or make a nice move or something and look up, and he'd be just sitting there. He's not an emotional person."

Even after games, his dad would be low-key about his performance.

"You liked that move, didn't you Dad?" Cory would say.

And his dad would respond, "It was all right."

So the touchdown against Arizona State was even more special. "That's the first time my dad ever complimented me on something like that," said Cory. "When he did, I felt real good."

Ross didn't feel so good during much of his freshman year at Nebraska. After suiting up for the first couple of games, with an outside chance he might play, he was ham-

pered by injuries. He underwent shoulder surgery and then was slowed by a knee injury in winter conditioning.

As a result, he wasn't in the best physical condition during spring practice and went into two-a-days at seventh on the depth chart. "You've got to sit there and watch everybody perform at levels you thought you could perform at, but you can't do anything," he said. "It was real discouraging."

"You get frustrated. I mean, there are just so many of us."

But he didn't come to Nebraska to stand on the sideline. The abundance of I-backs was going to make him better. "You're going to work hard just because you want it as much as they do," he said.

Ross is no stranger to competition, or to pressure. He felt considerable pressure to accept a scholarship from Colorado, and when he picked the Buffaloes' designated rival, out of all the schools recruiting him, that made matters worse. "It was a big thing," he said.

The situation was further complicated by the fact that Eric Bieniemy, a former Buffalo, was the running backs coach at Denver's Thomas Jefferson High when Ross was a senior.

Ross credits Bieniemy for developing his work ethic, "being hard on me."

He also appreciates Bieniemy's support. Bieniemy respected his decision to go to Nebraska, and never interfered — until taking the job as Gary Barnett's running backs coach.

Even then, Bieniemy didn't pressure him, Ross said. He just told Barnett, "Hey, we need this guy here." The Buffaloes hoped for a package deal, coach and player, but to no avail.

Despite his determination, Ross figured that climbing the depth chart might take a little longer than it has. "I did think I could be one of those guys," he said. "Every guy here

does." But he thought that might not happen until next year, after Darran Diedrick and Collins were gone.

Ross scored his second touchdown as a Cornhusker against Utah State, on a 13-yard run. But the first one is always special. And that experience will remain with him forever.

"I looked at it as a blessing from God," he said. "I went through a whole lot."

Under the circumstances, he might have been forgiven if he had celebrated excessively, though there would have been punishment of some sort if he had drawn a penalty flag.

Maybe he would have had to run stadium steps, or maybe extra wind sprints. "I just probably wouldn't have seen the field again," he said with a laugh. "I don't know."

"I wouldn't celebrate to find out, though." ■



**Cory Ross carried 3 times for 44 yards in his first game as a Husker.**



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# Tough From The Start

*Nebraska players know they're in for a fight in Big 12 opener at Iowa State*



**Terry DOUGLASS**

NEED PROOF that the Big 12 Conference has truly developed into one of the premier football powers in the country? Look no further than Nebraska's league opener at former doormat Iowa State.

The road game against the upstart Cyclones presents the Cornhuskers with a realistic risk of losing their conference opener for the first time since 1974 when they fell 21-10 to Missouri. The last time Nebraska

dropped its league opener on the road came during Hall of Fame coach Tom Osborne's rookie season in 1973, when Missouri beat NU 13-12.

Since starting the year by nearly upsetting traditional power Florida State, Iowa State's potential has opened many eyes. With talented multi-threat quarterback Seneca Wallace at the controls, the Cyclones should be a dangerous date on anyone's schedule.

Certainly, the trip to ISU will make for a difficult back end of a two-game road stretch that started with Penn State. Fortunately for the Huskers, they have an off weekend in between to catch their breath.

"I've been telling the guys the last few weeks that we've got to step it up in practice because we were looking at a tough stretch," linebacker T.J. Hollowell said. "Our best shot is just to do everything we need to do in practice each week and take another step forward. We've really got to make sure our game is polished up."

The Huskers knew the Big 12 would be tough, but the schedule is starting to look more precarious all the time. With Colorado, Kansas State, Iowa State and a much-improved Missouri team lurking in the North Division, only the Kansas game now looks like a comfortable win.

Throw in road trips to Texas A&M and Oklahoma State to go with a home date against Texas, and it's clear: The Huskers had better bring their "A game" week in and week out.

"I think everyone in the country wants to find out what we've really got on this team, and really, I think we're eager to find that out, too," Nebraska strongside linebacker Scott Shanle said. "This is a tough stretch, and it's going to help us find out how good we really are."

That's especially the case for the trip to Ames, where Iowa State Coach Dan McCarney's team would love nothing more than to get a little payback for several lopsided losses to Nebraska. With home-field advantage and a gifted senior quarterback, the Cyclones have to like their chances.

"That game is going to be real tough because Seneca Wallace is playing well, and he's such a great player and such a great leader," Hollowell said. "Even after that, there are more big games coming up. You've always got to be ready when you play in the Big 12 because every team has enough to beat you if you're not playing your best."

"Big 12 play — that's when it gets real serious."

Even with the obvious pitfalls, several Huskers claim

they eagerly await the intense competition in the Big 12.

"I've been looking forward to it, really," senior tackle Dan Vili Waldrop said. "The level goes up. When the Big 12 season comes around, you know that it's time to play because you want to win the championship, and every other team you face wants to win it just as much."

Shanle agrees, noting that defensive coordinator Craig Bohl one asked the players what their favorite part of the season was. Some said it was the season opener, and others said it was the bowl game. But not Shanle.

"I said it's the Big 12 season," Shanle said. "It's just a different brand of football. You've got a lot of other teams that approach it just as seriously as you do. You've got to earn your win every week."

That goes double for conference road games. Despite being one of the Big 12's top programs during its 6-plus seasons of existence, Nebraska hasn't been immune to finding trouble away from home.

The Huskers sport a 41-7 all-time record in Big 12 regular season play. However, Nebraska is 18-6 in league road games, including last year's lone conference loss at Colorado.

All six of NU's Big 12 road losses were to teams ranked in the Associated Press Top 25 at the time. In fact, Nebraska hasn't won a Big 12 road game against a ranked team since the league's inaugural season in 1996, when the Huskers beat a No. 16-ranked Kansas State team 39-3 at Manhattan.

"We want to play well on the road this year," Shanle said. "That's something we've recognized that we haven't always done as well in the past, and we want that to change this year."

Potentially, three Nebraska conference road opponents (Iowa State, Texas A&M and Kansas State) could all be ranked when they host the Huskers. Center John Garrison said it's going to be important for the team to put it all together outside of the cozy confines of Memorial Stadium.

"As a team, we've talked about road games and how we could better prepare for them as a unit," Garrison said. "A lot of teams crumble because of the noise and the big stadiums, but I don't think we'll be a team that will ever let that affect us."

Few teams know more about what home-field advantage means than Nebraska. With an NCAA-record sellout string of 250 games, the Huskers have won 71 of their last 72 games at Memorial Stadium. That includes a 6-0 mark in Big 12 Conference home games against ranked foes.

Despite history, fullback Judd Davies said the team embraces the challenge of trying to win in enemy territory.

"This may sound a little strange, but it's great when you go somewhere and almost all the people are against you. It just kind of bonds you together as a team," Davies said. "It's exciting because we're going to pull out all the stops, go (all) out and see what we've got." ■



**Linebacker T.J. Hollowell said the Big 12 gets "real serious."**

**Terry Douglass** is the sports editor of the Grand Island Independent. He can be reached at [tdbbdouglass@netzero.net](mailto:tdbbdouglass@netzero.net).

## Wakeup Call

**Iowa State gains credibility  
with performance against Florida State**



**Curt McKEEVER**

IT'S NOV. 14, 1992, and heavy underdog Iowa State is giving its dwindling number of supporters something to ease the sting of another disappointing football season.

The Cyclones are hanging on to a 12-10 lead over fifth- and seventh-ranked Nebraska in the fourth quarter.

The scene in Ames, Iowa, becomes more surreal when the Cyclones' Marv Seiler, a fourth-string, senior walk-on quarterback, rambles 78 yards (part of his game-high 144) to set up a touchdown that clinched the only time a Tom Osborne-coached team would lose to a foe that finished with a sub-.500 record.

Flash forward 10 years.

Although Iowa State has made a dramatic turn for the better (Dan McCarney has guided the Cyclones to back-to-back bowls) — here they are about to take on a Florida State program that has compiled the best winning percentage in NCAA Division I-A over the past 12 seasons.

The scene looked like it came straight from a Twilight Zone episode.

Writing on deadline for Nebraska's game against Arizona State, most reporters have had little time to pay attention to the FSU-ISU contest on the television screens above them in the Memorial Stadium press box.

Last time I'd looked, the Cyclones, who had thrown an interception, fumbled a kickoff and had a field goal blocked in the game's opening 13 minutes, trailed 31-7.

But now, ISU quarterback Seneca Wallace picks up 20 yards on a spectacular scramble to the Florida State 1-yard line. And this isn't just a playing-to-the-finish kind of performance. Iowa State trails 38-31.

The "episode" ends with Wallace being tackled for no gain. And if it had been the Twilight Zone, Rod Serling surely would have walked out and winked at the audience and told them they hadn't seen the last of these Cyclones.

Indeed, with McCarney leading the charge in his eighth season, they are back. And they just might be the next legitimate contender for the Big 12 North Division crown.

Yes, a program that last won a conference title 90 years ago.

"I'm speaking for one ballgame, but I think it indicates their program is for real," Kansas State Coach Bill Snyder said. "I think we've known that for a long time."

Having Wallace, the 2001 Big 12 Newcomer of the Year and now the league's most-exciting talent, helps. After stumbling out of the chute against the Seminoles, the senior regained his stride and nearly pulled off an unthinkable comeback. In the fourth quarter alone, he completed 9-of-11 passes for one touchdown, and he ran for another.

His scramble on the next-to-last play appeared to be good enough, as he dove and stretched the ball in his right hand over the goal line. Officials, however, ruled him out of

bounds, and the Seminoles had held on.

Tailback Hiawatha Rutland, who typifies the hard-nosed, low-profile players that dominate ISU's roster, summed up the Cyclones' feelings when he said, "a loss is a loss, whether it comes down to the final play of the game or you get blown out."

His teammates and coaches handled it minus much whining over the out-of-bounds ruling.

McCarney did claim to have a videotape that showed conclusive evidence Wallace made it into the end zone. But he quickly noted, "it doesn't do any good now. I'm not going to waste any time with it."

The Cyclones followed his lead and a week later blasted Kansas 45-3 to take the early Big 12 North lead.

Entering that game, Iowa State had lost its previous three matchups that followed a seven-point-or-less loss to a top-five opponent.

Iowa State followed its win against Kansas by beating up Tennessee Tech. The Cyclones then had two winnable games against arch-rival Iowa and Troy State before playing host to Nebraska in a contest that could prove pivotal to their bowl hopes.

After playing the Huskers, ISU still has trips to Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas State and Colorado. And because they added the Florida State game, giving them a 13-game schedule, the Cyclones need seven wins to become bowl eligible.

"They played a great Florida State team off their feet," Oklahoma State Coach Les Miles said, "but they did finish second in that contest. The point is, you have to win those (when you are knocking at the door)."

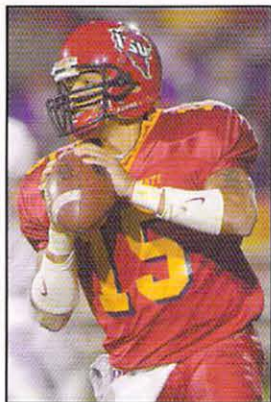
Colorado Coach Gary Barnett, who pulled Northwestern out of the depths of the Big Ten Conference, still believed the Cyclones stood to reap big dividends from their showing against the Seminoles.

"(McCarney) certainly has awakened everybody in the country, and you need a game like that to awaken," Barnett said. "Everybody got the wakeup call. You can't buy that kind of credibility. Even though it was a hard loss, they'll get rewards from that."

They also know now that with Wallace, no deficit should look too big.

After nearly shocking the Seminoles, ISU receivers coach Mike Grant, a former Nebraska quarterback, told the Omaha World-Herald, "for the first time since I've been here, our team really hunkered down and didn't let itself get rolled over . . . I hope people around the country are starting to see that we can play a little football in Ames."

Husker fans just hope they don't witness a similar result in Ames as what happened 10 years ago. But if that does end up being the case, this one will make a little more sense. ■



**ISU's Seneca Wallace was the 2001 Big 12 Newcomer of the Year.**

**Curt McKeever** is a sportswriter, covering the University of Nebraska for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football he is the primary beat writer for the men's basketball and baseball teams.

# Still Growing

*Late bloomer Sievers gets faster, grows into middle linebacker*

**A**fter a session of Nebraska's football camp in the summer of 1999, Ron Brown took Chad Sievers aside and told him the Cornhuskers were interested in him as a wide receiver.

They weren't promising him anything, Brown told Sievers, who had caught 50 or so passes during his junior season at Valley, Neb., High. But they wanted him to work to improve his speed.

Even though Sievers had caught the ball well during the camp, he hadn't tested well. He had run the 40-yard dash in 4.9 seconds, and his vertical jump had been barely 30 inches, if that.

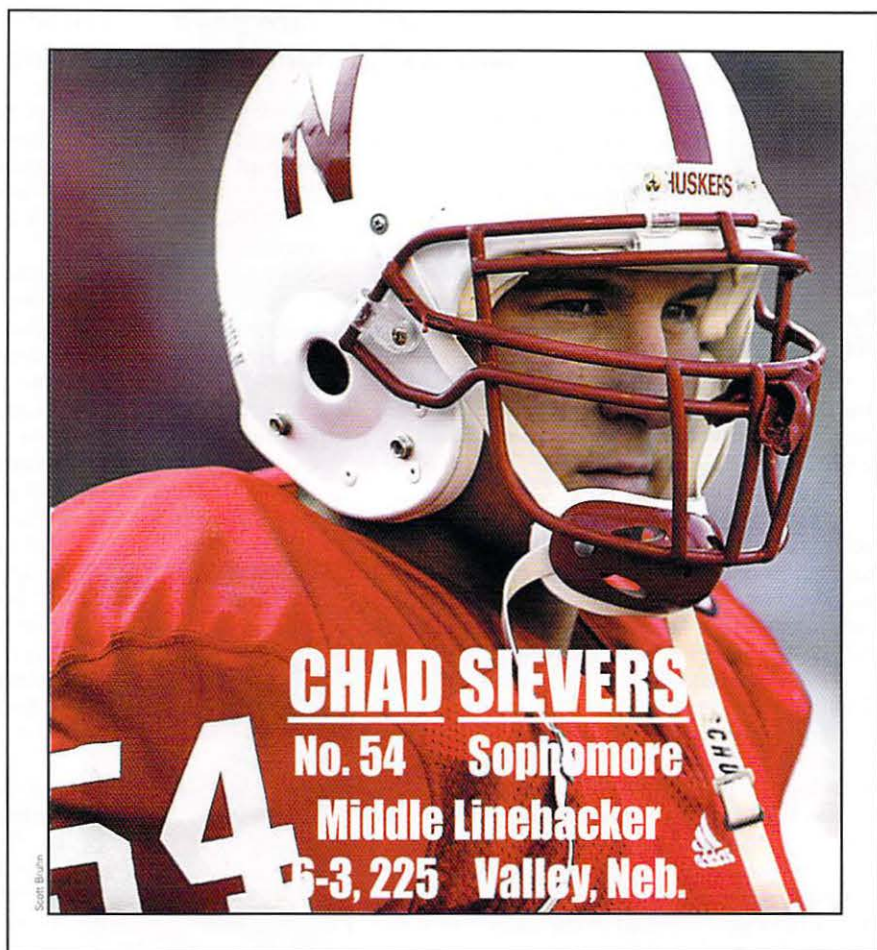
So when Brown brought up the subject of speed, "it was over for me," said Sievers.

He wouldn't have another opportunity to test for Nebraska before it identified the recruits to whom it would offer scholarships. And that meant he would probably have to walk on or go elsewhere.

His situation was further complicated by the fact that he didn't play wide receiver as a senior. He was moved to running back on offense and from cornerback to free safety on defense.

As it turned out, his concern was justified. Nebraska asked him to walk on, while New Mexico State offered a scholarship — as a weakside linebacker. If he were going to play defense in college, Sievers preferred free safety. But he took what he could get and committed to the Aggies.

Iowa State talked to him about playing free safety, and Nebraska came back and told him if he walked on, he would be put on scholarship after his first year. But by then it was too late.



That was a little over two years ago. Now Sievers is on scholarship at Nebraska, after transferring from New Mexico State, where he played both weakside and strongside linebacker.

He started out on the strongside at Nebraska, playing there while sitting out last fall, but he moved to the middle during the spring, and now is the top back-up to sophomore Barrett Ruud.

When he went in against Troy State, after Ruud suffered a broken hand on the third play from scrimmage, Sievers was playing middle linebacker for the first time ever in a game.

He "kind of grew out of" the weakside linebacker position. His senior year in high school, he stood between 6-foot-1 and 6-foot-2 and weighed about 190 pounds. Now he's a little over 6-foot-3 and he weighs 225 pounds, give or take. And he's still growing. "I'm a real late bloomer," he said.

His dad, Scott, is 6-foot-8 and "grew 6 inches after high school."

Sievers might be getting a late-growth spurt, but his dedication seems to have been high when he arrived. "He's a very intense lifter," said defensive coordinator Craig Bohl.

"He has really physically developed over the last couple of years."

So even though he's certainly not heavy for the position, "he's a very, very strong, explosive middle linebacker. He's got long arms," Bohl said. "We feel comfortable with him."

Sievers also has exceptional determination, as indicated by his coming back from a partial MCL tear, suffered in early August, and being able to play in the second game of the season.

In most cases, the tear he suffered would require at least a month of rehabilitation. But when the trainers told him former Cornhusker Eric Johnson had come back from a similar injury in three weeks, "I told myself I'm going

to make this happen. I'm going to come back as soon as I can," he said.

So two days after the Arizona State game, and just 20 days after the injury occurred — when teammate Le Kevin Smith was blocked into his knee — Sievers was back at practice.

Five days later, he was playing against Troy State.

"You can attribute a lot of that to his work habits," said Bohl.

Sievers still has the enthusiasm of a freshman, in part because of having to sit out last season. When you have to wait like that, "you're hungrier than ever," he said.

For some people, a potential 15-game schedule, counting the Big 12 championship game and a bowl, is daunting. But "not for us," Sievers said. "We love the game."

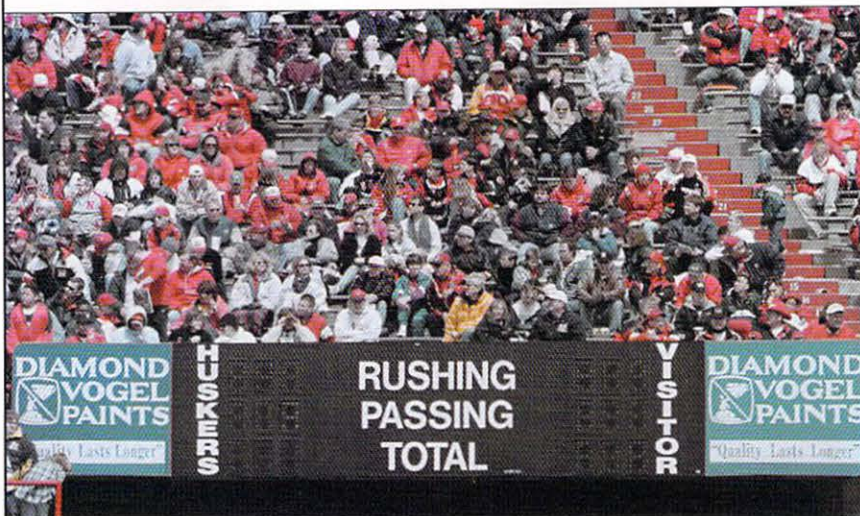
He had the fourth-most performance index points on the team during testing in August. Varsity players don't run the 40-yard dash in pre-season testing because of the potential for hamstring pulls, but he ran the second-fastest time in the 10-yard dash, a position-record 1.53 seconds.

Only I-back Marques Simmons was faster (1.51).

Clearly, Sievers has taken Brown's advice. ■

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# 'We Don't

*Nebraska's philosophy is to catch and return as many punts as possible*

**By Mike Babcock**

**F**air catch? DeJuan Groce wouldn't think of it. "We don't fair catch here," he said, "never have."

Nebraska's philosophy is to catch and return as many punts as possible. With a violation of the NCAA's halo rule now being penalized 10 yards instead of five, "it makes it more the case that we should catch every punt," said Cornhusker assistant George Darlington.

And not only catch them, but return them.

Though the Cornhuskers ranked fourth in the Big 12 and 14th nationally in punt returns, with an average of 12.9 yards per return, they were first in punt return yardage with 853. Colorado led the nation, averaging 17.4 yards per return. But the Buffaloes had only 522 yards on 30 returns. By comparison, Nebraska returned 66 of its opponents' 97 punts.

"Any yardage we can get, regard-

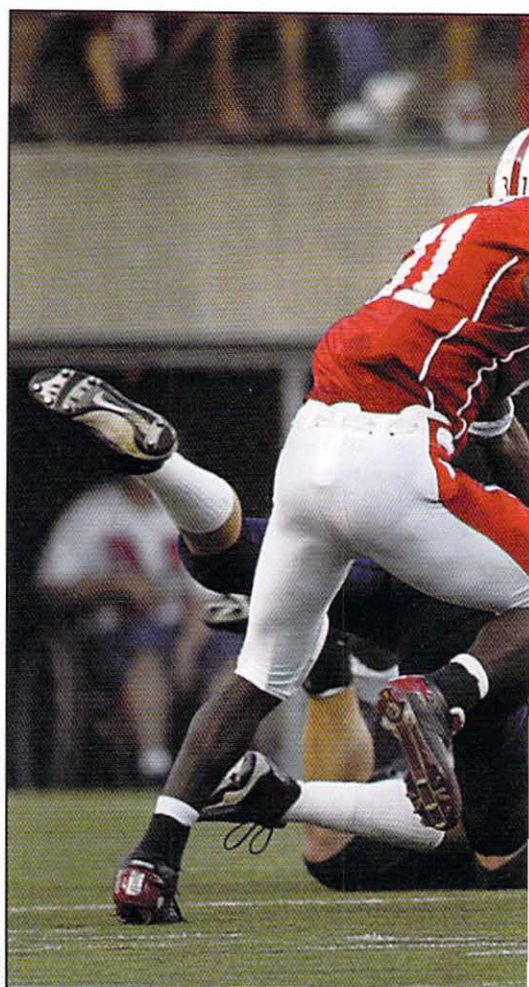
less of the situation, we want to get," Darlington said.

The only exception is near the goal line, where Nebraska's punt returners are coached to get out of the way, particularly if the ball is poorly kicked. Then the returner's job is to warn his teammates to get out of the way, too, to "scatter like somebody threw a hand grenade," he said.

The signal word, used by most college teams, is "Peter." And "we want people to scream it, not yell it, because they have to jolt the concentration of their blockers," said Darlington.

If Nebraska's blockers don't hear "Peter," they know the punt is going to be returned.

Although speed and running ability are essential, a punt returner must first be able to catch the ball, and hold onto it. Keyuo Craver began last season as the Cornhuskers' No. 1 punt returner, for example, but Groce replaced him



because of his having fumble problems early on.

Craver was a little faster, but Groce was more consistent in catching the ball.

Punts are difficult to catch, in part because of the height from which they drop. Catching them requires focus and the ability to relax in the face of on-coming defenders.

Blockers — typically cornerbacks Pat Ricketts and Fabian Washington — are assigned to shadow the "bullets" down the field. And Groce has complete confidence in them.

On one of Groce's punt-return touchdowns against Troy State, Washington lost his man but was

## **Nebraska's Longest Punt Returns\*** **(all for touchdowns)**

- 94 yards Bobby Newcombe vs. Missouri (2000)
- 92 yards Johnny Rodgers vs. Oklahoma St. (1971)
- 87 yards Dave Butterfield vs. TCU (1976)
- 84 yards Pat Fischer vs. Oklahoma St. (1960)
- 83 yards DeJuan Groce vs. Troy State (2002)

\*Through Utah State game

# Fair Catch'



DeJuan Groce returned four punts for 66 yards against Utah State, a week after tying an NCAA record with returns of 52 and 83 yards for touchdowns against Troy State. Groce is a senior from Garfield Heights, Ohio.

"If it hits your chest . . . we don't have Velcro on our chests."

Being able to catch the ball, cushion it properly, and then turn into a runner "is a skill not everybody has," said Darlington. And even if a player has it, he might not want to return punts.

"There are certain kids down through the year that wouldn't mind returning kickoffs but they didn't want any part of returning punts, especially when there wasn't the 2-yard halo (rule)," he said. "And even with that, there are some people who don't want any part of punt returns."

A punt returner has to have good running ability, not just straight-line speed. He must have good field vision, be able to find the holes and get to them. He also must have the proper mindset.

Mike Fullman, for example, was determined to score every time he fielded a punt. And "I think DeJuan has that mindset, too," Darlington said. "It isn't just a deal of catching the ball and getting what you can get. It's the mindset, 'I'm going to put the ball in the end zone.'"

That requires the 10 other players on the punt return team as well.

"Wherever I catch the ball, hopefully my guys are blocking," said Groce.

The direction of the return is predetermined: right, left or middle,

able to catch up with him and block him away from Groce and the direction of the return.

"The big thing is to get the return going," Darlington said.

Often, if a punt returner can make one guy miss, he'll have a chance to score.

But first, he has to catch the ball, with his hands. "You don't want to catch it with your body," said Groce. "You don't want it hitting your shoulder pads. You want to give with it.

"If it hits your shoulder pads, it may deflect and fly all over the place."

And if it does that, someone else

will be returning punts.

Jon Bostick, a split end who occasionally returned punts, "was probably as good of a player as we've had at catching the ball and not even hearing a sound. He had such good technique," Darlington said. "You want to catch it so softly and correctly that you don't hear the ball hit your hands.

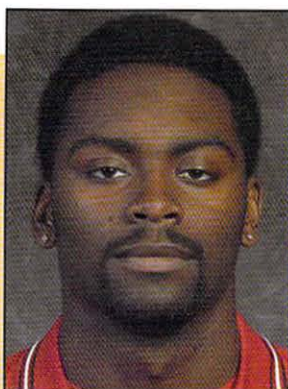
**"It's the mindset. I'm going to put the ball in the end zone."**

**— Nebraska assistant George Darlington**

## Punt Return Yardage, Season\*

618	Rodgers (1972)
548	Rodgers (1971)
469	Groce (2001)
452	Larry Wachholz (1965)
349	Rodgers (1970)

\*Through 2001 season



DeJuan Groce

## Punt Return Yardage, Career\*

1,515	Rodgers (1970-72)
829	Newcombe (1997-2000)
817	Tyrone Hughes (1989-92)
788	Wachholz (1964-66)
767	Dana Brinson (1985-88)

\*Through Utah State game

with variations in how it will be blocked. Sometimes, blockers will attempt to set up a wall. Other times, they'll be assigned to a particular man. Wall returns were more common in high school, according to Groce.

Players cross the line of scrimmage to pressure the punt, then peel off to set the wall.

Some teams lay out bags 5 yards apart in practice, for exact spacing on a wall, Darlington said. "If anybody tries to cross your face, between you and the man in front of you, you block him."

Typically, Groce is the only player deep on punt returns, but if a team is trying to kick the ball away from him or if a punter is particularly erratic, Nebraska will drop a second man — Ben Cornelsen, who returned a punt for a touchdown against Kansas last season, has been No. 2 on the depth chart.

With just one player back, it can be difficult to get to every punt, "especially ones that aren't kicked well," said Darlington. "So our approach is, if you have a 'sprayer' — if you will — we're going to have two guys back, just because we don't want a ball to hit the ground and roll."

There was a time when the Cornhuskers regularly dropped three players "primarily because the punters were so crappy that they were spraying the ball all over the place," he said. "We got three people back so that if a guy kicked a 25-yard punt, it didn't hit and roll another 20 yards."

Dropping three limits the ability to pressure the punter, of course.

Regardless of how many are deep, the concern remains the same. After

getting a signal from the sideline on how the return will be set up, the first concern is catching the ball. And

after catching it, "you just try to find your hole and get there," Groce said.

"No fair catch, never." ■



# It all adds up!

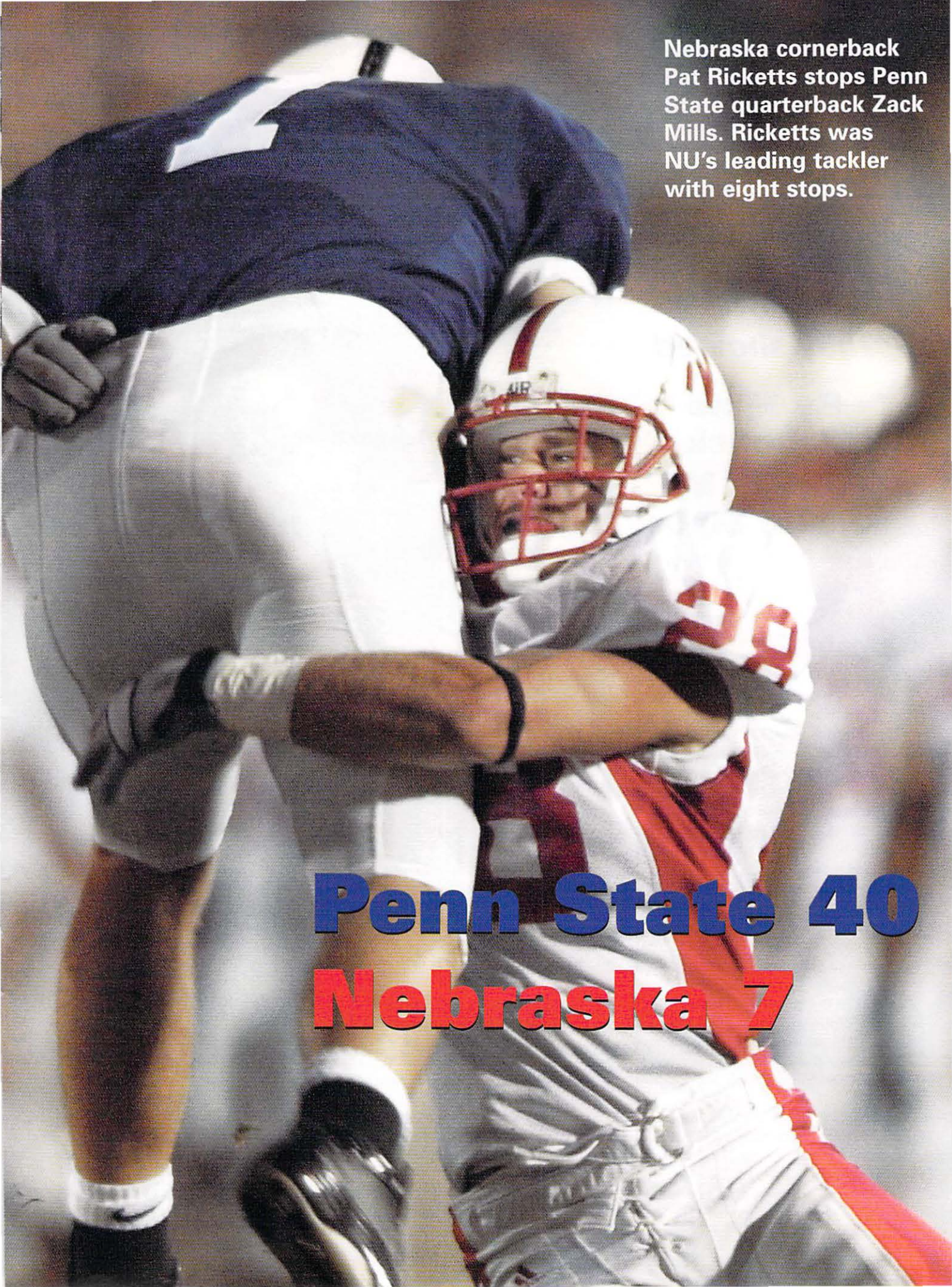
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Nebraska cornerback  
Pat Ricketts stops Penn  
State quarterback Zack  
Mills. Ricketts was  
NU's leading tackler  
with eight stops.

**Penn State 40**  
**Nebraska 7**

# Reality

***Solich says  
Huskers are  
better than  
they showed***

**By Mike  
Babcock**

**Photos by  
Jason Sipes**

**A** "Zack for Heisman" banner, hanging from the second deck at the north end of Beaver Stadium beside the play clock, flapped in a pleasant south breeze throughout the game.

Zack was Penn State sophomore quarterback Zack Mills, whose chances of winning the Heisman Trophy this season are, well, non-existent. Still, the enthusiasm of those who hung the banner couldn't be questioned. And on this particular night, he at least had the look of a Heisman candidate.

He completed 19-of-31 passes, without an interception, for 259 yards. And despite a rushing net of only 32 yards, his running kept Nebraska's defense off-balance, in a 40-7 victory.

Taken in context, the banner didn't seem entirely out of place. He's a "talented athlete, and if you let him do certain things, he can hurt you," is how Penn State Coach Joe Paterno put it.

"Mills is good. We'd be foolish if we didn't let him handle the ball."

The same could be said of Nebraska's Jammal Lord, even though the numbers didn't necessarily show it. Lord rushed for 111 yards. But he threw three interceptions.



Penn State's Tony Johnson (11) and Bryant Johnson (24) lead the celebration after a touchdown as the Nebraska defense tries to regroup.

And that was his focus afterward. "I played terrible," he said. "I hurt the team more than I helped. I have to go back to square one. If I don't get better, it's going to be a long year for me."

It's also going to be a long year for Nebraska because Lord is the heart of the offense.

Granted, he struggled in his first road game as a starter. But the burden of the stunning loss couldn't be put on his shoulders alone. In fact, "I

thought Jammal did what he could," said center John Garrison. "Offensively, we didn't do a very good job of putting him in a good situation."

Coach Frank Solich was more direct in his assessment.

Lord is better than he showed, Solich said. And "we're a better team."

Lord, like the team, will prove to be resilient, of necessity if not in fact.

"He doesn't have much choice but

# Check



to bounce back," said Solich.

Nebraska's most lopsided loss since 1990 was a "reality check" for a team that still hasn't shed the stigma of back-to-back losses against Colorado and Miami to finish last season.

The game began to take on an ugly look for Cornhusker fans at the start of the second half, with a 16-play, 80-yard touchdown drive that was vintage Nebraska. The problem was, Penn State mounted the drive, which required nearly half of the third quarter and increased the lead

to 19-7.

The clincher would come 2 minutes later, when Rich Gardner intercepted a Lord pass and returned it 42 yards for a touchdown to extend the lead to 26-7. At that point, "I think we got down on ourselves," said Cornhusker cornerback DeJuan Groce. "We never gave up, though."

They did seem to lose their focus, however, as Penn State added two more touchdowns, the first by covering 55 yards on three carries and the second set up by Lord's second interception.

There were signs of imminent disaster during the first half, as the Nittany Lions gained 291 yards but managed only 13 points. They were forced to settle for field goals twice, the first after being first-and-goal at the Nebraska 1-yard line and the second after being third-and-3 at the 16.

"On a positive note, in the first half, I thought we played red-zone defense fairly well," said defensive coordinator Craig Bohl. But there were few other positives, on either side of the ball.

The Cornhuskers' defensive game plan was to "make them one-dimensional," Bohl said.

But Mills kept them from doing that, completing 15-of-25 passes in the first half. He was "in a rhythm, and we had a hard time getting him out," said Bohl.

Mills had plenty of help from his receivers. Bryant Johnson caught five passes for 100 yards during the first half, and finished with 147 receiving yards. And he was complemented by tailback Larry Johnson, who rushed for 128 yards on 19 carries and caught four passes for 35 yards.

Johnson rushed for two touchdowns, as did Michael Robinson.

Nebraska expected the Nittany Lions to be balanced offensively. But the 25 first-half passes caught the Blackshirts by surprise. And once Mills got them back on their heels with his passes, he turned to his running backs during the second half and "they really ate us up," Bohl said.

The defense made "certainly correctable mistakes," he said.

But "obviously there's a lot of work we need to do."

The same could be said of Nebraska's offense, which showed a glimpse of its old self early in the second quarter. After Penn State drove 80 yards on eight plays to a touchdown on its third possession, the Cornhuskers responded with an eight-play, 84-yard touchdown drive to tie.





Nebraska may have caught a break, when a ball that appeared to slip out of Jammal Lord's hand (above) was ruled an incomplete pass. The Huskers' only score came on a 2-yard run by Judd Davies (left) that tied the game in the second quarter.

Lord completed three-of-three passes for 41 yards and carried twice for 32 yards during the drive, which was capped by fullback Judd Davies from 2 yards out.

In less than 3 minutes, Nebraska had answered. But the Cornhuskers wouldn't cross midfield again until late in the fourth quarter, after Penn State had 40 on the scoreboard.

Nebraska reached the Nittany Lion 28-yard line before Lord's third interception.

"We didn't give ourselves a chance in the ballgame," said Solich, who made no excuses. "It's tough to have it snowball on us and get out of hand the way it did."

"It came down to, they played better football than we did."

Much better. And Mills was a big reason, Heisman candidate or not. ■

# 4TH & 1 INCHES

Notes And Quotes From The Penn State Game

## HOMECOMING, OF SORTS

Solich was born in Johnstown, Pa., located south and west of State College, and lived in nearby Smokeless, Pa., as a youngster, when his father worked in the coal mines. After his late father contracted black lung disease, the family moved to Cleveland, Ohio, where Solich went to high school.

During his weekly teleconference on the Tuesday before the game, Solich said he was proud that his father had been a miner and "how he went about things."

Two generations of his family worked in the mines.

Solich still has family in that part of Pennsylvania.

"I like the area," he said. "To me, it's a beautiful area. Any time you grow up somewhere, in your early childhood, you always have some fond memories."

As was the case for everyone else, the game was a tough ticket for Solich because of the number of relatives who wanted to attend. "It was actually difficult, in fact impossible, to get enough tickets to supply to all of them," he said. "I have relatives as far away as Boston that are coming to the game."

## SAY IT AIN'T SO, JOE

Penn State Coach Joe Paterno said he wasn't completely surprised by the outcome. "We thought we had a good shot at it," he said. "You are never as good as you think you are when you win like that, and they're (the Cornhuskers) not as bad. Everything went our way."

"But I really thought we had a good shot at beating them, certainly not by that many points. Anyone who thinks they are going to win a football game by 30 points is nuts."

## HASN'T BEEN LARGER

The crowd of 110,753 was the largest ever to watch the Cornhuskers, as well as a Beaver Stadium record. The previous high was 93,781 for the 2002 Rose Bowl. Interestingly enough, the second and third largest crowds to watch Nebraska in the regular season also were at Beaver Stadium, in 1982 (85,304) and 1980 (84,585). An estimated 92,000 watched Nebraska in the 1941 Rose Bowl game.

Of the 110,753, an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 were dressed in red.

The stadium's previous record attendance was 109,313 for last season's opener against Miami.

## NO REDSHIRT YET

Freshman quarterback Curt Dukes was included on Nebraska's travel roster of 86. Solich said the decision on whether to redshirt Dukes is game-by-game, and "you can almost say quarter-by-quarter."

Sophomore Mike Stuntz is definitely No. 2 behind junior Jammal Lord.

But "we haven't ruled anything out," Solich said.

## TIPS FROM LOWERY

Josh Brown, Sandro DeAngelis and Nebraska's other place-kickers got some tips from former Kansas City Chiefs place-kicker Nick Lowery on the Tuesday before the game.

Lowery, who completed a master's degree at Harvard following 18 seasons in the NFL, was in Lincoln to speak at the university's journalism school because of his involvement with a mentoring program for Native American youth — Native Vision.

## THUNDER RETURNS

I-back Thunder Collins, who is sitting out a four-game suspension for violating unspecified NCAA rules, returned to practice on the Monday before the game. Solich said allowing Collins to practice is "the same decision we've made with everybody" suspended with the possibility of playing.

"If you don't let them practice and you suspend them for four games, after four games, that's probably a six-game suspension because you have to get back in shape and you have to start learning the plays again," said Solich. The earliest Collins could return is the McNeese State game.

## NEBRASKA CONNECTIONS

Penn State president Dr. Graham Spanier was the chancellor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln from 1991 to 1995, before returning to Penn State, where he has been a member of the faculty.

Bill Kenney, the Nittany Lions' tackles and tight ends coach, was a graduate assistant at Nebraska under Coach Tom Osborne in 1986 and 1987. ■

# 2002 Schedule

1	Aug. 24	Arizona State (3-1), W 48-10	1-0
2	Aug. 31	Troy State (1-2), W 31-16	2-0
3	Sept. 7	Utah State (1-2), W 44-13	3-0
4	Sept. 14	@ Penn State (2-0), L 40-7	3-1
5	Sept. 28	@ Iowa State (3-1), TBA	
6	Oct. 5	McNeese State (3-0), TBA	
7	Oct. 12	Missouri (2-1), TBA	
8	Oct. 19	@ Oklahoma State (1-2), TBA	
9	Oct. 26	@ Texas A&M (2-0), TBA	
10	Nov. 2	Texas (2-0), TBA	
11	Nov. 9	Kansas (Homecoming) (1-2), TBA	
12	Nov. 16	@ Kansas State (3-0), TBA	
13	Nov. 29	Colorado (1-2), 2:30 p.m., ABC	
	Dec. 7	Big 12 Championship at Houston, Texas, 7 p.m., ABC	

## Upcoming Opponents' Schedules

Iowa State (3-1)	
Aug. 24	Florida State, L 38-31
Aug. 31	Kansas, W 45-3
Sept. 7	Tennessee Tech, W 58-6
Sept. 14	@ Iowa, W 36-31
Sept. 21	Troy State
Sept. 28	Nebraska
Oct. 12	Texas Tech
Oct. 19	@ Oklahoma
Oct. 26	@ Texas
Nov. 2	Missouri
Nov. 9	@ Kansas State
Nov. 16	@ Colorado
Nov. 23	Connecticut

McNeese State (3-0)	
Aug. 31	Grambling, W 52-20
Sept. 7	@ Youngstown St., W 28-13
Sept. 14	@ La.-Monroe, W 24-19
Sept. 28	Western Kentucky
Oct. 5	@ Nebraska
Oct. 19	Jacksonville State
Oct. 26	@ Sam Houston State
Nov. 2	@ Stephen F. Austin
Nov. 9	Southwest Texas State
Nov. 16	@ Northwestern State
Nov. 23	Nicholls State

## Big 12 at a Glance

Saturday, Sept. 14	
Penn State 40, Nebraska 7	
Iowa State 36, Iowa 31	
Bowling Green 51, Missouri 28	
UCLA 38, Oklahoma State 24	
Texas 52, North Carolina 21	
Kansas 44, Southwest Missouri State 24	
Kansas State 63, Eastern Illinois 13	
USC 40, Colorado 3	
New Mexico 23, Baylor 0	
Texas Tech 42, Mississippi 28	

Saturday, Sept. 21	
Oklahoma 68, UTEP 0	
Troy State at Iowa State	
SMU at Oklahoma State	
Virginia Tech at Texas A&M	
Houston at Texas	
Bowling Green at Kansas	
USC at Kansas State	
Colorado at UCLA	
Tulsa at Baylor	
North Carolina State at Texas Tech	

## Game 5

### At Iowa State Sept. 28

Location: Ames, Iowa

Enrollment: 27,823

2002 record: 3-1

Coach: Dan McCarney,

8th year

Series: Nebraska leads 80-14-2



Time TBA

Trice Stadium, Ames, Iowa

### Cyclone to Watch

Senior quarterback Seneca Wallace has picked up right where he left off last season, when he passed for 2,044 yards and 11 touchdowns and was named the Big 12 Conference Offensive Newcomer of the Year. The transfer from Sacramento City Junior college is well on his way to bettering those marks. His 361 yards passing against Iowa gave him 1,138 through four games, along with six touchdowns.



### Quick Facts

The 2002 Cyclones have certainly shown the ability to rally. In the season-opener, they trailed Florida State 24-0 before losing 38-31 when Seneca Wallace was stopped just short of the goal line on the final play. ISU trailed Iowa 24-7, before rallying to win 36-31.

Iowa State has not allowed a touchdown in the third quarter and has outscored its opponents 95-17 in the second half through four games.

Wallace passed for a career-high 361 yards against Iowa, the fourth-highest total in school history.

The brutal schedule includes eight games against teams who played in bowls last season and back-to-back road trips to Oklahoma (Oct. 29) and Texas (Oct. 26).

## On Deck

### McNeese State Oct. 5

Location: Lake Charles, La.

Enrollment: 8,700

2002 record: 3-0

Coach: Tommy Tate, 3rd year

Series: first meeting

Time TBA

Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, Neb.



# Tentative 2 Deeps

## NEBRASKA OFFENSE

SE	9	Wilson Thomas***	6-6	215	Sr.
	19	John Klem**	6-0	210	Sr.
LT	51	Richie Incognito	6-3	295	Rf.
	69	Nick Piovendo	6-3	300	So.
LG	78	Mike Erickson*	6-4	295	So.
	55	Junior Tagoa'i*	6-2	295	Jr.
C	52	John Garrison***	6-4	290	Sr.
	79	Josh Sewell	6-2	300	Jr.
RG	59	Wes Cody**	6-2	305	Sr.
	71	Jake Andersen	6-1	300	So.
RT	68	Dan Vili Waldrop**	6-5	315	Jr.
	67	Nate Kolterman**	6-3	310	Sr.
TE	99	Aaron Golliday***	6-4	290	Sr.
	86	Kyle Ringenberg*	6-4	240	Sr.
QB	10	Jammal Lord**	6-2	210	Jr.
	16	Mike Stuntz*	6-1	200	So.
FB	4	Judd Davies**	6-0	255	Jr.
	45	Steve Kriewald*	5-10	255	So.
IB	30	Dahrran Diedrick**	6-0	225	Sr.
	22	Cory Ross	5-6	205	Rf.
WB	89	Troy Hassebrook***	6-4	215	Sr.
or	81	Ben Cornelsen**	5-10	190	Sr.
PK	26	Josh Brown***	6-2	190	Sr.

## NEBRASKA DEFENSE

LR	57	Chris Kelsay***	6-5	255	Sr.
	92	Justin Smith***	6-4	265	Sr.
NT	59	Ryon Bingham*	6-3	280	Jr.
	66	Le Kevin Smith	6-2	300	Rf.
DT	55	Jon Clanton***	6-2	290	Sr.
or	94	Patrick Kabongo**	6-6	305	Jr.
RR	98	Demoina Adams**	6-2	260	Sr.
	88	Trevor Johnson**	6-4	250	Jr.
SLB	43	Scott Shanley***	6-2	240	Sr.
	47	Ira Cooper*	6-2	220	So.
MLB	38	Barrett Ruud*	6-2	240	So.
	54	Chad Sievers	6-3	225	So.
WLB	7	Demorrio Williams	6-1	205	Jr.
or	17	T.J. Hollowell**	6-0	220	Jr.
LCB	28	Pat Ricketts**	5-11	180	Jr.
	3	Fabian Washington	6-0	175	Fr.
FS	21	Philip Bland*	5-11	205	So.
	31	Jerrell Pippens**	6-2	195	Jr.
ROV	2	Aaron Terpening***	5-11	190	Sr.
	40	Lannie Hopkins	6-2	210	So.
RCB	5	DeJuan Groce**	5-10	190	Sr.
	1	Lornell McPherson*	5-9	175	So.
P	19	Kyle Larson	6-0	195	Jr.

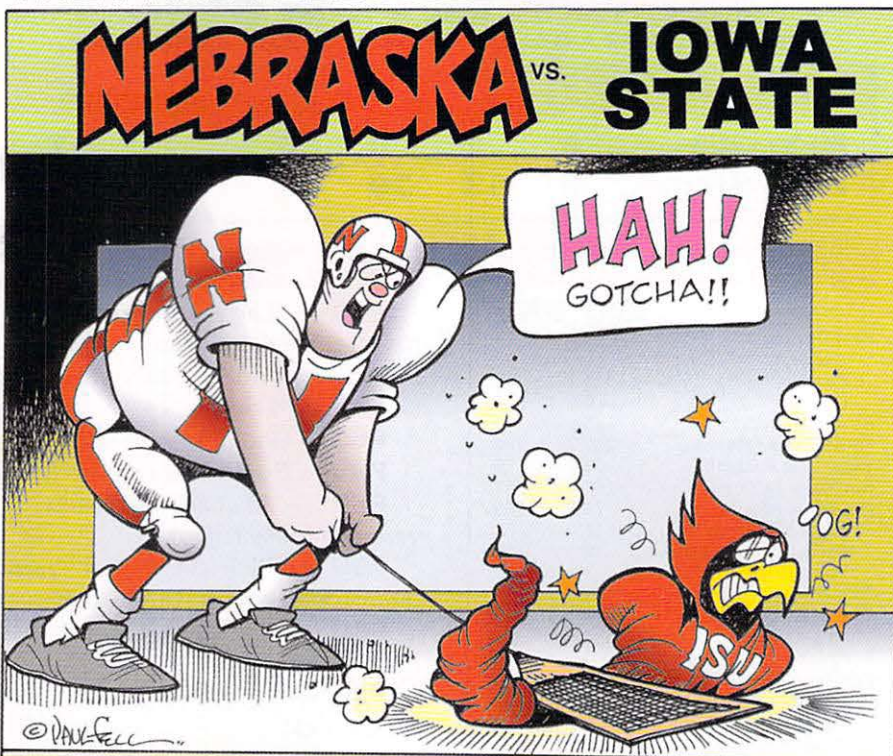
## IOWA STATE OFFENSE

SE	82	Lane Danielson**	6-0	195	Jr.
	13	David Banks-Bursey	5-8	178	Jr.
LT	71	Casey Shelton*	6-5	295	Jr.
	62	Johannes Egbers	6-2	275	Fr.
LG	69	DeWayne Johnson	6-1	321	Sr.
	78	Collin Menard	6-3	306	Jr.
C	68	Zach Butler**	6-3	292	Sr.
	79	Matt Boekes**	6-0	280	Jr.
RG	65	Bob Montgomery**	6-2	310	Jr.
	72	Kory Pence	6-4	317	Fr.
RT	53	Cale Stubbe	6-3	295	Sr.
	75	Emmanuel Valcoun	6-5	305	Jr.
TE	93	Kyle Knock***	6-2	262	Sr.
	85	Kenny Segin	6-4	252	So.
QB	15	Seneca Wallace*	6-1	184	Sr.
	16	Cris Love	6-5	215	So.
TB	12	Hiawatha Rutland**	6-0	208	Jr.
	4	Michael Wagner**	5-7	188	Jr.
FB	45	Joe Woodley**	5-10	227	Jr.
	29	Matt Grosserode	5-10	222	So.
WR	83	Jamaul Montgomery**	6-0	197	Jr.
	81	Jon Davis	6-3	185	Fr.
K	49	Adam Benike	5-10	220	Jr.

## IOWA STATE DEFENSE

RE	1	Tyson Smith**	6-2	235	Jr.
	56	Shaheed Richardson	6-4	250	Jr.
DT	92	Jordan Carstens**	6-5	300	Jr.
	51	Andy Leaders	6-2	270	So.
NG	91	Tim DeBrink*	6-3	275	So.
	66	Nick Leaders	6-2	275	Fr.
E	55	Beau Coleman*	6-1	245	Sr.
	43	Cephus Johnson	6-2	240	Fr.
SLB	41	Jeremy Loyd*	6-2	230	Sr.
	58	Erik Anderson	6-0	218	So.
MLB	7	Matt Word***	6-0	235	Sr.
or	47	Chris Whitaker**	5-10	225	Jr.
WLB	33	Brandon Brown*	5-10	230	So.
	45	Joe Woodley**	5-10	227	Jr.
SS	17	Anthony Forrest*	6-0	195	So.
or	6	JaMaine Billups**	5-8	202	Jr.
FS	18	Marc Timmons**	5-8	168	Jr.
	8	Steve Paris	6-1	195	Fr.
LCB	21	Atif Austin***	5-7	185	Jr.
	10	Johnny Smith III**	6-11	165	Jr.
RCB	11	Ellis Hobbs III*	5-7	183	Jr.
	16	Harold Clewis**	5-8	190	Sr.
P	14	Tony Yelk*	6-0	201	So.

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# PICKS

## IOWA STATE AT NEBRASKA

### Brian Hill Editor

This is certainly no longer automatic, especially at Ames. The Huskers will have had a week to recover from a tough road trip to Penn State. Iowa State will have five games under its belt, one more than Nebraska. The Cyclones have Seneca Wallace, but Nebraska has more weapons and can score in more ways — offensively, defensively and special teams. **Nebraska 34, Iowa State 21**

### Mike Babcock Contributing Editor

This game has been a focus for Iowa State. There's no doubt about that. And Seneca Wallace is the kind of quarterback who

has traditionally given Nebraska defenses fits. The question is whether the Cyclones have enough offensive weapons to go with him and enough defense to slow down the Cornhuskers. Ames will be rocking. **Nebraska 24, Iowa State 21**

### Terry Douglass Grand Island Independent Sports Editor

Next to the stop at Texas A&M, Nebraska's trip to Iowa State shapes up as the toughest road game of the season for the Cornhuskers. Look for Cyclones quarterback Seneca Wallace to give the Blackshirts fits all day long, but tradition should prevail in the end as NU rallies in the fourth quarter. **Nebraska 31, Iowa State 28**

# BY THE NUMBERS

## Nebraska vs. Penn State

Sept. 14, 2002 • Beaver Stadium • State College, Pa.

### Score By Quarters

Nebraska	0	7	0	0	—	7
Penn State	0	13	20	7	—	40

### Team Stats

	NU	PSU
First Downs	18	24
Rushing	14	12
Passing	4	11
Penalty	0	1
Rushing Attempts	45	43
Yards Gained Rushing	265	236
Yards Lost Rushing	13	19
Net Yards Rushing	252	217
Net Yards Passing	76	259
Passes Attempted	16	31
Passes Completed	8	19
Had Intercepted	3	0
Total Plays	61	74
Total Net Yards	328	476
Avg. Gain Per Play	5.4	6.4
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	0-0
Penalties-Yards	7-60	3-20
Punts-Yards	6-281	3-139
Avg. Per Punt	46.8	46.3
Punt Returns-Yards	1-12	3-27
Interceptions-Yards	0-0	3-50
Fumble Returns-Yards	0-0	0-0
Kickoff Returns-Yards	2-27	1-17
Possession Time	27:03	32:57

### Scoring

**PSU** — Larry Johnson 7-yard run (Robbie Gould kick)

**NU** — Judd Davies 2-yard run (Josh Brown kick)

**PSU** — Gould 20-yard field goal

**PSU** — Gould 33-yard field goal

**PSU** — Michael Robinson 8-yard run (pass failed)

**PSU** — Rich Gardner 42-yard interception return (Gould kick)

**PSU** — Robinson 11-yard run (Gould kick)

**PSU** — L. Johnson 2-yard run (Gould kick)

**Att.** — 110,753

**Weather** — mostly cloudy

**Temp.** — 66-70

### Individual Statistics

#### NEBRASKA

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Lord, J.	14	111	7.9	27	0
Diedrick, D.	16	71	4.4	15	0
Ross, C.	7	27	3.9	11	0
Davis, J.	4	21	5.2	14	1
Pilkington, R.	3	14	4.7	11	0
Davis, J.	1	8	8.0	8	0

#### PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct	Yds.	TD
Lord, J.	8-16-3	50.0	76	0

#### RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Pilkington, R.	2	29	14.5	16	0
Davis, J.	2	14	7.0	9	0
Golliday, A.	1	16	16.0	16	0
Ross, C.	1	9	9.0	9	0
Cornelsen, B.	1	5	5.0	5	0
Thomas, W.	1	3	3.0	3	0

#### PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Larson, K.	6	281	46.8	56

#### PUNT RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Groce, D.	1	12	12.0	12	0

#### KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Davis, J.	1	26	26.0	26	0
Hassebroek, T.	1	1	1.0	1	0

#### DEFENSE

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Ricketts, P.	5	3	8	0	0	0
Pippens, J.	5	0	5	0	0	0
Ruud, B.	3	2	5	1-1	0	0
Bland, P.	3	2	5	1-5	0	0
Sievers, C.	2	3	5	1-1	0	0
Groce, D.	4	0	4	0	0	0
Hollowell, T.	4	0	4	0	0	0
Williams, D.	3	1	4	0	0	0
Smith, L.	3	1	4	0	0	0
Terpening, A.	2	2	4	0	0	0
Adams, D.	2	1	3	0	0	0
Shanle, S.	1	2	3	0	0	0
Adams, T.	2	0	2	1-1	0	0
Kelsay, C.	1	0	1	1-8	0	1-8
Thomas, W.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Clanton, J.	1	0	1	0	0	0

Johnson, T.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Washington, F.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Simmons, M.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Bullocks, J.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Bingham, R.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Siegel, S.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Kriewald, S.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Buller, C.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Kabongo, P.	0	1	1	0	0	0

#### PENN STATE

##### RUSHING LEADERS

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Johnson, L.	19	123	6.5	35	2
Robinson, M.	4	56	14.0	28	2
Mills, Z.	14	32	2.3	9	0

##### PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Mills, Z.	19-31-0	61.3	259	0

##### RECEIVING LEADERS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Johnson, B.	8	147	18.4	26	0
Johnson, L.	4	35	8.8	21	0
Williams, C.	3	42	14.0	20	0
Johnson, T.	3	32	10.7	19	0

##### PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Royer, D.	3	139	46.3	56

##### PUNT RETURNS

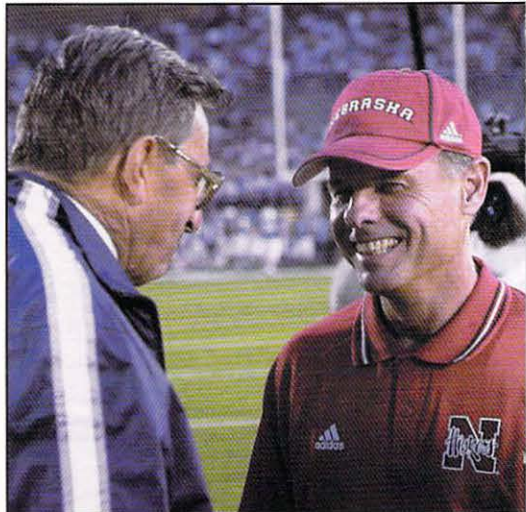
Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Johnson, B.	3	27	9.0	15	0

##### KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Johnson, L.	1	17	17.0	17	0

##### DEFENSE LEADERS

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Stewart, L.	8	0	8	0	0	0
Mayer, S.	6	2	8	1-1	0	0
Ware, D.	5	0	5	0	0	0
Gardner, R.	4	1	5	0	1-42	0
Haynes, M.	3	1	4	1-7	0	0
Capone, G.	2	2	4	0	0	0
Kennedy, J.	2	2	4	0	0	0
Harrell, C.	2	1	3	0	1-0	0
Adams, A.	1	2	3	1-1	0	0
Lowry, C.	2	0	2	1-1	0	0
Zemaitis, A.	1	1	2	0	0	0



Nebraska's Frank Solich was all smiles during this pregame meeting with Penn State Coach Joe Paterno.

## 2002 SEASON STATS

#### RUSHING

Name	G	Att.	Yds.	YPG	TD
Lord, J.	4	63	365	91.3	3
Diedrick, D.	4	65	306	76.6	2
Ross, C.	4	24	141	35.3	2
Davis, J.	4	13	89	22.3	0
Davis, J.	4	14	47	11.8	3
Collins, T.	1	10	22	22.0	0
Simmons, M.	3	6	16	5.3	0
Kriewald, S.	4	4	13	3.2	0
Thomas, W.	4	1	9	2.2	0
Pilkington, R.	4	4	7	1.8	0
Grixby, D.	3	2	6	2.0	0
Stuntz, M.	3	6	2	0.7	0

#### PASSING

Name	G	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Lord, J.	4	27-56-4	48.2	328	3
Stuntz, M.	3	2-4-0	50.0	25	0

#### RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds.	YPC	YPR	TD
Thomas, W.	4	10	83	8.3	20.1	2
Pilkington, R.	4	4	49	12.2	12.2	0
Cornelsen, B.	4	3	39	13.0	9.8	0
Davis, J.	4	3	21	7.0	5.2	0
Hassebroek, T.	4	2	25	12.5	6.2	0
Diedrick, D.	4	2	13	6.5	3.2	0
Ross, C.	4	2	12	6.0	3.0	0
Bowling, J.	3	1	62	62.0	20.6	0
Herian, M.	2	1	33	33.0	16.5	1
Golliday, A.	4	1	16	16.0	4.0	0

#### FIELD GOALS

Name	G	Att.	Good	Long
Brown, J.	4	4	4	44

#### PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Larson, K.	21	991	47.2	71

#### PUNT RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Groce, D.	11	263	23.9	83	2

#### KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Davis, J.	7	178	25.4	42	0

#### DEFENSIVE LEADERS

Name	G	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	S/Yds.
Williams, D.	4	11	10	21	1-1	0	0
Ruud, B.	4	9	11	20	5-16	0	1-8
Ricketts, P.	4	11	5	16	1-4	1-11	0
Bland, P.	4	9	7	16	2-6	0	0
Hollowell, T.	4	8	7	15	1-5	0	1-5
Bingham, R.	4	3	11	14	2-2	0	0
Shanle, S.	4	5	9	14	2-2	0	0

#### TEAM STATISTICS

Total Offensive Yards	1,375	1,402				
Plays	272	289				
Average Per Play	5.1	4.9				
Average Per Game	343.8	350.5				
Net Rushing Yards	1,022	525				
Attempts	212	144				
TDs Rushing	10	7				
Net Passing Yards	353	877				
Completions	29	66				
Average Per Pass	5.9	6.0				
Average Per Catch	12.2	13.3				
Average Per Game	88.3	219.3				
TDs Passing	3	1				
Sacks By-Yards	12-104	5-30				
Fumbles-Lost	8-3	4-1				
Penalties-Yards	19-143	22-181				
<b>Scoring</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>OT</b>	<b>TOT</b>
NU	27	41	35	27	0	130
Opponents	10	16	34	19	0	79

# Goals

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# 'It Means a Lot'

*Memories make Bohl's current experiences all the more special*

By Mike Babcock

**M**emorial Stadium is much too secure now. But there was a time, 30 or so years ago, when enterprising youngsters attended Nebraska football games for free.

Craig Bohl was among them. When the Cornhuskers played at home, he and some friends would ride the bus downtown, early on the morning of the game, and head to the stadium.

They would scale what they called a "candy cane" fence and hustle into a bathroom in the northeast corner, where they remained for as long as two hours before emerging to mingle with the crowd.

Once, they managed to work their way onto the Nebraska sideline near the end of a lopsided victory. That was the highlight of Bohl's illicit attendance of Cornhusker games.

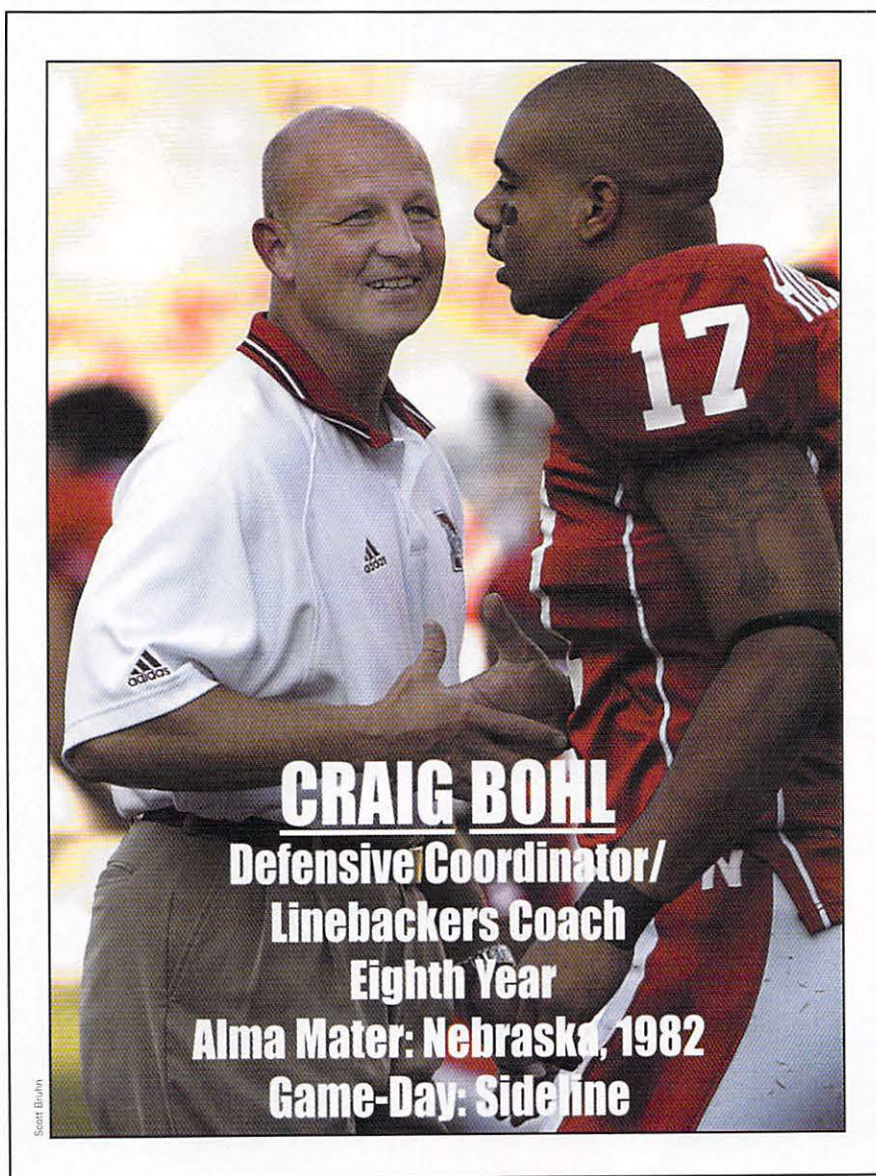
Afterward, he even got a player to part with a chinstrap. He is fairly certain the player was either Jeff Kinney or Johnny Rodgers. But he has forgotten with the passing of time.

He no longer has the chinstrap, of course, only the memory.

Such memories make Bohl's current experiences as Nebraska's defensive coordinator and linebackers coach all the more special. Last season, for example, when the No. 3 Cornhuskers upset No. 2 Oklahoma 20-10 at Memorial Stadium, "it was a huge game for me, to be a part of it," he said.

"I was part of another great Oklahoma game. It really means a lot."

Bohl has been on the Nebraska sideline, legitimately, since 1995, and he was there for seven seasons in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as a player



**CRAIG BOHL**  
**Defensive Coordinator/  
 Linebackers Coach**  
**Eighth Year**  
**Alma Mater: Nebraska, 1982**  
**Game-Day: Sideline**

and as an undergraduate and graduate assistant coach.

He walked on at Nebraska in 1977, after earning high school All-State recognition as a defensive back at Lincoln East, but never earned a letter during a career cut short by injuries. A broken leg sidelined him for his third season and a shoulder injury prevented him from playing his fourth.

After that fourth season, Coach Tom Osborne asked him if he would be interested in helping with the Cornhusker freshman team, as an undergraduate assistant to freshman coach Frank Solich.

Bohl had been preparing for a busi-

ness career. His major was business administration. But when Osborne offered him the opportunity to coach, he eagerly accepted.

The injuries that cut short his playing career motivated rather than frustrated him.

"There's a reason for everything," he said. "There's probably a master plan. And I think if anything, because of the injuries, I never really had a chance to do what I wanted athletically."

"So maybe that furthered my interest in the sport. Never was there frustration, where I said I just want to walk away. There are too many posi-

tive things in athletics."

He considers himself fortunate to have been given the chance to do something he enjoys at such a young age. "I don't want to say stumble into," he said. But he decided then he would become a coach. And from that point on, "all of my energies went into doing whatever it would take."

What it took was typical of most coaches. Bohl spent three seasons working with the Nebraska freshman team as a part-time coach. He was the defensive coordinator in 1983.

He left Nebraska to take his first full-time coaching job at North Dakota State, "assuming that the chances of coming back to Nebraska would be quite remote," he said.

Staff stability, little turnover, has been an essential element of the Cornhuskers' success. "So I just went into college coaching because that's what I had a passion to do," said Bohl.

That passion moved him from North Dakota State, after one season, to Tulsa for two seasons, Wisconsin for two seasons, Rice for five seasons and finally Duke, where, as defensive coordinator for Coach Fred Goldsmith, he contributed to a dramatic turnaround in 1994.

The Blue Devils, 3-8 in 1993, went 8-4 and played in the Hall of Fame Bowl.

Because of that success, some ques-

tioned Bohl's decision to return to Nebraska as linebackers coach, replacing Kevin Steele, who left for the NFL following the 1994 season.

"A lot of people cautioned me about making that move," Bohl said. "They thought career-wise it didn't make sense. But for me it really did. It was a no-brainer."

So was his acceptance of the defensive coordinator's job following Charlie McBride's retirement after the 1999 season. He had been Goldsmith's defensive coordinator for six seasons, the first five at Rice. And Goldsmith had been a defensive coordinator for 16 seasons before becoming a head coach.

Because of his background, Goldsmith, who also had coached linebackers, probably "had the biggest impact on me fundamentally," said Bohl. "I really learned an awful lot from him."

Bohl began coaching linebackers at Tulsa, simply because no one on the new staff there had coached them and he was chosen for the job. He had a "fairly short learning curve," he said.

"I think, many times, guys end up coaching a position that's a little bit different than what they played. And actually, at times, it can be an advantage because you really take a hard look at what goes into being able to execute those fundamentals that make

up the position."

Being a successful coach depends on more than the fundamentals of a position, however. Working for Goldsmith, he learned that approach and attention to detail are essential to success.

A coach has to be consistent and demanding, Bohl said. "I think probably your personality as far as being able to communicate with the players is the most important thing, the vision you have and being able to articulate that and have a player understand. It doesn't really matter how much you know. It matters how much they know, and how much they can function and do when they're fatigued."

"When you're younger, you think it's all these lines, X's and O's, that make the difference. In the end, it depends on guys being confident and understanding what they're trying to do."

Such a realization comes "fairly gradual," he said.

Walking on at Nebraska hasn't made him a better coach, necessarily. But "it certainly has given me a special insight into what walk-on players can do for our program, how important they are," he said. "I looked at it as a privilege to be a part of this program."

That perspective first began to take shape more than 30 years ago. ■

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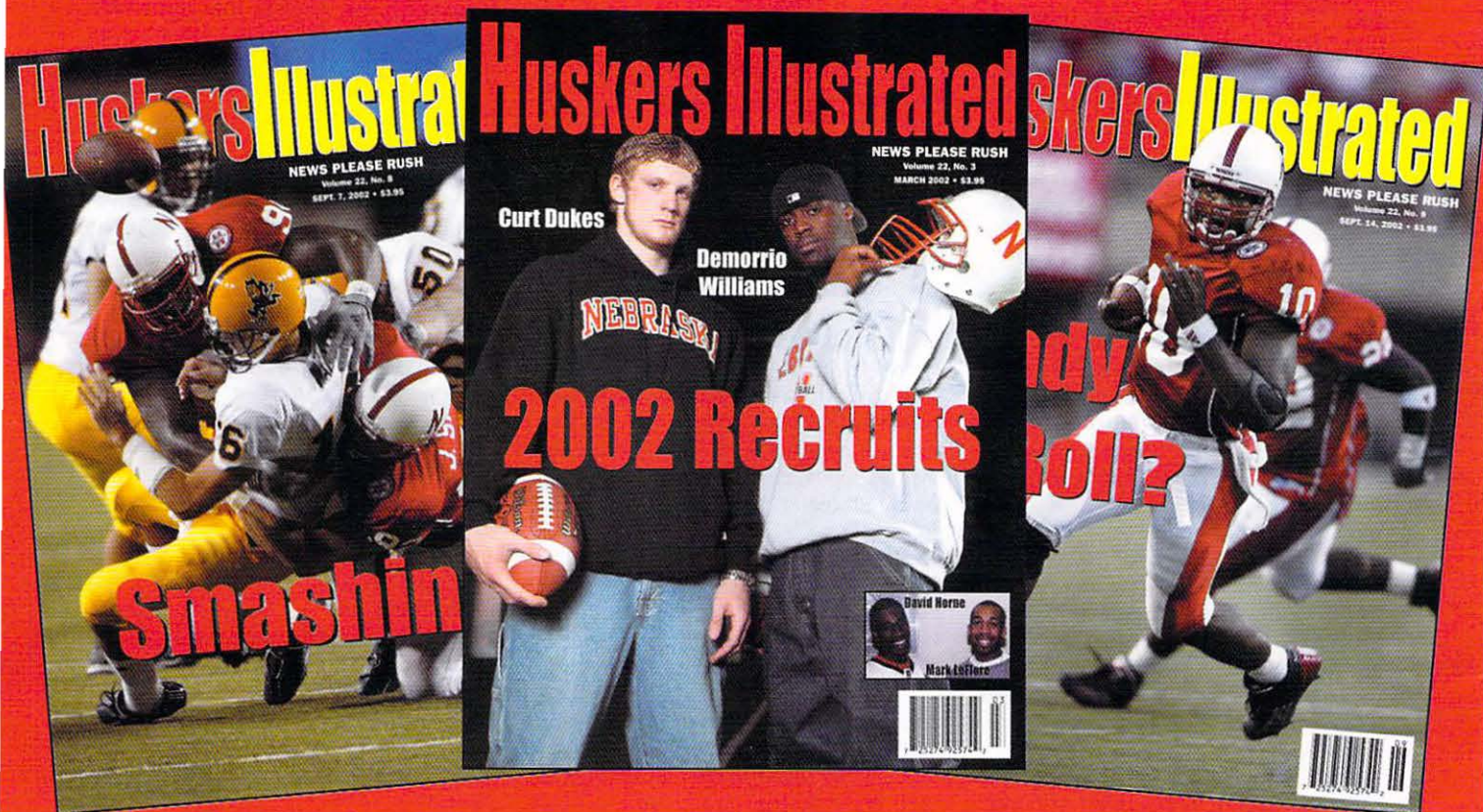
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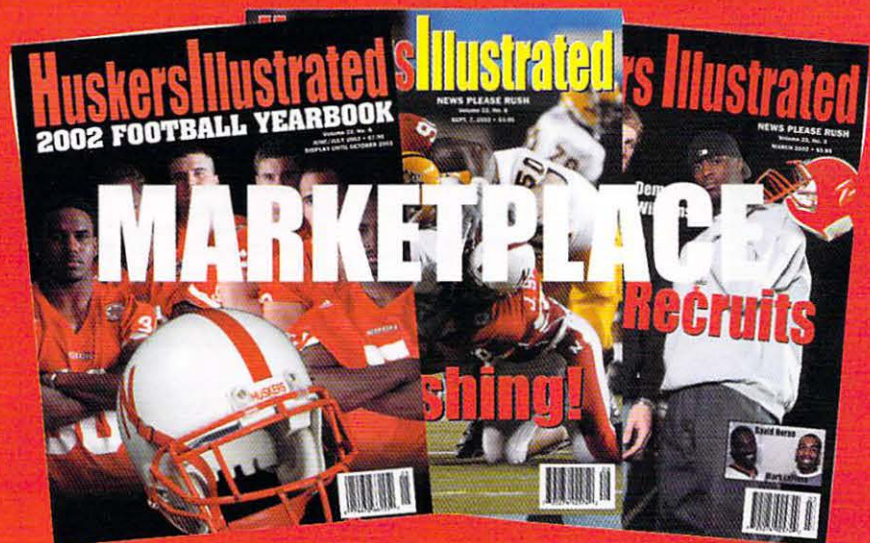
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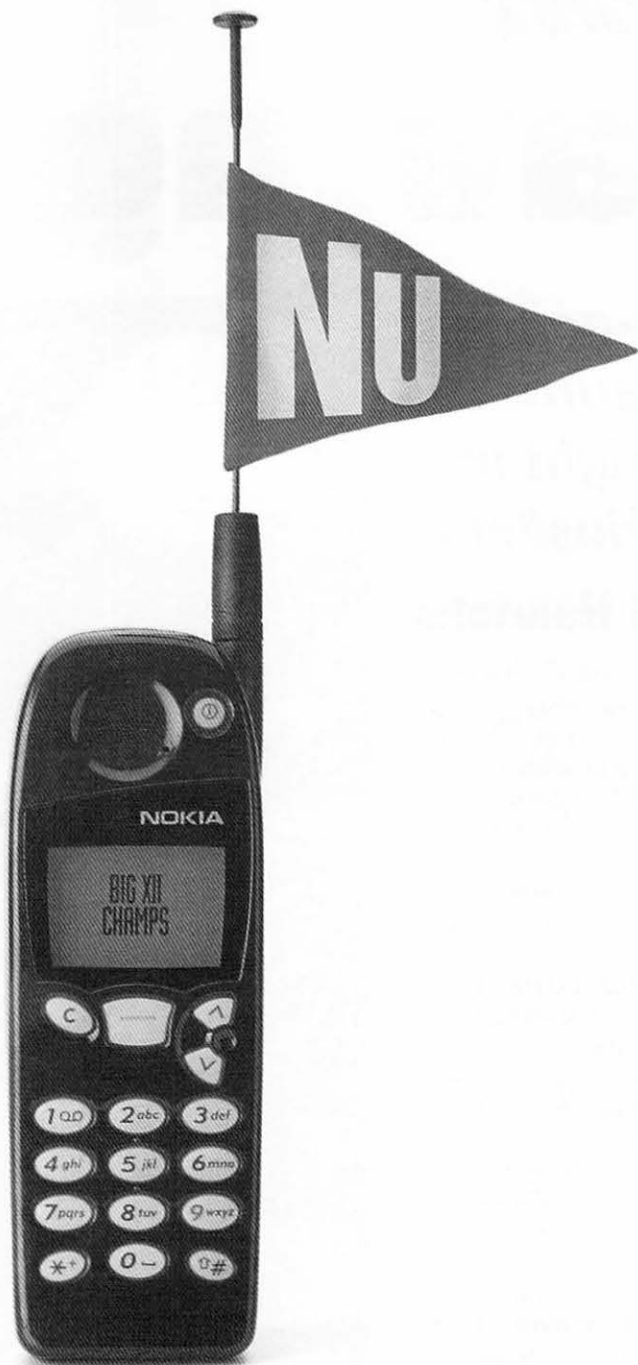
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# Having Fun

*Easy-going  
Saleaumua  
fits right in  
with Huskers*

**By Todd Henrichs**

**S**he could be playing in Hawaii, where the sunshine, sandy beaches and surf seem perfectly suited for the fun-loving lifestyle of Jennifer Saleaumua.

But with the sun setting on summer, Saleaumua, a native of San Diego, is landlocked in Nebraska. And she's happy.

With Saleaumua, playing volleyball — whenever or wherever — is all about having fun.

"Winning is a big part," says the Nebraska freshman, "but why win and not have fun?"

In many ways, Saleaumua is different from the typical Husker. Not only is she NU's first starter from California in recent years, Saleaumua possesses the defensive and ball-handling skills which are most often the trademark of West Coast teams.

Searching for a comparison, NU Coach John Cook relates Saleaumua's role to that of Angie Oxley on the 2000 Nebraska squad that won it all. But Saleaumua has the potential to go beyond even that.

Her speed and strength — she was third among Huskers in performance index during preseason testing — allow Saleaumua to transition to offense quickly. She has a wide variety of attacks and can hold her own blocking at the net.

As a passer, Cook believes Saleaumua alone can raise All-American setter Greichaly Cepero's efficiency to an all-time high.



True freshman Jennifer Saleaumua, Volleyball Magazine's 2001 National High School Player of the Year, has proven to be a solid all-around player.

"Most of our players were multi-sport athletes who haven't had a lot of volleyball experience," Cook said.

"She has played a lot of volleyball.

"She will do things that people have not seen players in the

Coliseum do. With the plays that she'll make and just pursuing balls off the court, she's a fun player."

Her teammates say she doesn't seem like a freshman, and even in her first year, Saleaumua is considered integral in NU's run at another national championship.

The national player of the year out of high school, Saleaumua led her Bonita Vista team to a perfect record and capped her career with 57 kills in the state championship match.

Courted by all of the top collegiate programs, Saleaumua visited Nebraska, committed to a scholarship offer from Arizona but finally signed her national letter-of-intent with Hawaii. Saleaumua never enrolled there, though, in part because she was short of reaching all the academic requirements.

So last fall, as other freshmen began to make their mark with top teams, Saleaumua sat at home. She worked to become eligible but never with the intent to play at Hawaii.

Saleaumua saw having to sit out as a sign that Nebraska should have been her choice to begin with. She

talked to Cook, who in turn told Saleaumua she had to address the team and explain to them why she wanted NU to be her second chance.

Her future teammates told Cook they would welcome Saleaumua, and at the final four in her hometown — where Saleaumua missed out on a chance to play last year — she announced she was headed to Nebraska.

Saleaumua arrived in January to begin school and participated in spring drills. Immediately, her teammates were impressed.

"She is very confident in her skills on the court and really in every move she makes," senior captain Lindsay Wischmeier said. "From the very first day she came in, she stepped in right away and was aggressive and talking like she'd played for our team for a year.

"When everyone comes in, you get here and your eyes are wide open, your jaw dropped because you feel like you're starting from the beginning again. You see how well everyone else is playing and how far ahead they are.

"Jen fit in the mix right away."

Cook says Saleaumua's easy-going nature is due in large part to her upbringing. She's from a close-knit family that encompasses grandparents, aunts and uncles. Uncle Dan Saleaumua played in the NFL with the Kansas City Chiefs.

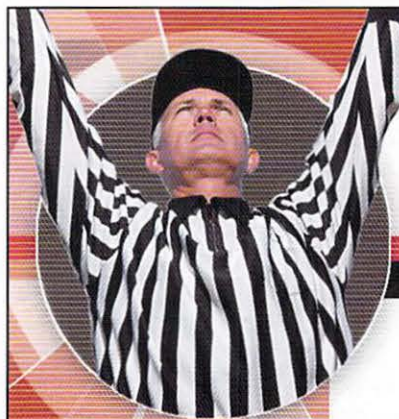
Himself a San Diego native, Cook knew of Saleaumua's family and her coaches and knew she could be a great player at the college level.

By joining Nebraska in January, she was able to get a handle on the academic side of things and had a strong first semester. But she won't forget that first walk to class through the snow.

Rain or shine, Saleaumua is always at home in the gym. In practice, her voice is the one that stands out. Cook says teammates love playing with Saleaumua because she's so vocal.

Saleaumua just loves to play.

"I think my role on this team is to encourage everyone, make them play up to the best level that they can and at the same time keep my confidence up by giving everybody energy out," Saleaumua said. "I like to have fun out there." ■



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# Defensive Line Search Narrows

*With several young tackles already on the team, NU can be more selective*

**By Doug Horwich**

**N**ebraska has amassed a formidable group of interior defensive linemen over the past few years, and the team is starting to reap the rewards of those efforts this season. However, despite the fact that Le Kevin Smith, Titus Adams, Seppo Ewvaraye, Jared Helming and Brandon Greeson are only freshmen, successful recruiting demands that coaching staffs continually plan for the future.

Players signed in the 2003 recruiting class, if redshirted, would see the field for the first time when the aforementioned group are juniors. Therefore, the Husker staff would probably like to sign one or two interior line prospects this year in order

## Nebraska Commitments for 2003

Player	Hometown (school)	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
Greg Austin	Cypress, Texas	6-2	275	OL
Andy Birkel	Lincoln (Southeast), Neb.	6-3	180	WR
Steve Craver	Hurst, Texas	6-2	195	DB
Josh Mueller	Columbus (Lakeview), Neb.	6-7	250	TE
*Trevor Neeman	Lincoln (Southeast), Neb.	6-3	225	TE/DE
*Kade Pittman	North Platte, Neb.	6-0	190	RB/DB
Bo Ruud	Lincoln (Southeast), Neb.	6-3	210	LB
Brandon Teamer	Omaha (Central), Neb.	6-5	256	DE

\*scheduled to enter school in the fall of 2002 as part-time students and receive scholarships in January 2003.

to ensure that experienced players will be able to take over starting duties once those players have graduated or left early.

Because of the current depth and talent level — as well as the fact that there really isn't a great sense of urgency regarding the position this year — the coaching staff has limited its focus to a handful of the nation's top interior line prospects.

One such player is Xavier Lawson-Kennedy (6-foot-3, 305 pounds, 5.0-second 40-yard dash) from Duncanville, Texas.

Lawson-Kennedy is rated as one of the top two or three defensive tackles in the nation by recruiting

services and likes Nebraska. As a junior, he registered an impressive 102 tackles, 10 sacks, 69 quarterback hurries and 32 tackles-for-loss.

Understandably, his performance caught the eye of coaches around the country. In fact, Lawson-Kennedy received written offers from nearly half of all Division I programs prior to the start of his senior season.

"My dad said that I've gotten more offers lately, but I haven't had time to look," he said. "The total is now up to about 56."

College coaches like Lawson-Kennedy's size, attitude and outstanding athletic ability.

"I'm an aggressive player with finesse," he said. "I would compare myself to (Baltimore Ravens defensive tackle) Sam Adams. I try to also play like Warren Sapp, 'cause he's my favorite player."

While Lawson-Kennedy has not yet identified a top-five, he currently lists Florida, Miami, Florida State, Nebraska, LSU, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Southern California, Texas and Texas A&M on his top 10

**"When I was 10 or 11, I went up to Lincoln for a track meet. I like it up there; the climate is perfect for me. Nebraska is a great school, too."**

**— Xavier Lawson-Kennedy, Duncanville, Texas**

list of favorites.

"Those are the ones that I am interested in and am looking at," Lawson-Kennedy said. "I don't have a leader at all at this time. I'm wide open. I haven't set up any of my official visits yet. In fact, I haven't really thought about it yet."

Despite not having any visits set up, Lawson-Kennedy has had a chance to see a few of his favorites.

"I've seen the campuses of all the Texas schools and have been to Oklahoma, LSU and Nebraska," he said. "When I was 10 or 11, I went up to Lincoln for a track meet. I like it up there; the climate is perfect for me. Nebraska is a great school, too."

Distance is a factor for Lawson-Kennedy, but he is not averse to leaving home. His parents don't have a preference as to where he goes to school and will support his decision completely.

"I'd like to stay close, but distance really isn't a problem at all," he said.

Lawson-Kennedy said he is looking for a school with a family atmosphere, great academics and a high graduation rate for football players.

"I think that one day, before or after a visit and not necessarily after all of my visits, I will wake up one morning and want to be a Gator or a Cornhusker or whatever," Lawson-Kennedy said about his eventual decision. "I really believe that it will just become clear."

Utah has been a productive recruiting ground for Nebraska over the past few years, in terms of defensive tackle prospects. Both Ryon Bingham and Manaia Brown made their way to Lincoln, while top national prospect Haloti Ngata committed to Nebraska last season but ended up at Oregon.

Husker coaches are again looking in Utah for defensive tackles and have their eye on Brian Soi (6-3, 290, 5.0) from Timpview High School in Provo, Utah.

Soi excels on both sides of the football but prefers defense and is being recruited on that side of the ball by Nebraska.

"I like defense better," he said. "A lot of people say that I get off the ball real quick. I have kind of a mean streak. I don't stop until the whistle blows. I try to hit somebody."

In-state Brigham Young University

# A Look at NU's Top Defensive Prospects

By Rick Shaw

**N**ebraska has commitments from three defensive standouts for the recruiting class of 2003.

Brandon Teamer, a defensive end from Central High in Omaha, Bo Ruud, an outside linebacker from Lincoln Southeast and Steve Craver, an outside linebacker out of L.D. Bell High in Hurst, Texas, have all given their oral commitments to play for the Huskers.

Here's an early look at 10 other top defensive prospects that Nebraska coaches are targeting this season:

**1. Tim Crowder, DE (Tyler, Texas)** — The 6-foot-4, 227-pound Crowder is rated as the third best defensive end prospect in the country by Rivals.com. Nebraska is in his early top four, along with Texas, Oklahoma, and LSU.

**2. Claude "Turk" McBride, DE (Camden, N.J.)** — Like Crowder, McBride is considered to be among the top 100 high school prospects in the country. The 6-4, 235-pound McBride utilized his 4.6-second 40-yard dash time to log 60 tackles and 16 sacks as a junior. McBride lists a top five of Miami, Nebraska, Syracuse, West Virginia, and UCLA.

**3. Demarrio Pleasant, LB (Lewisville, Texas)** — The 6-3, 225-pound Pleasant claims more than 25 scholarship offers but lists Nebraska, Oklahoma, USC, Colorado, and Texas as early favorites. Pleasant, is the cousin of former Husker Erwin Swiney. He has several family members who live in Omaha.

**4. Antwon Guidry, CB (Hutchinson, Kan.)** — Guidry originally signed with Nebraska out of high school in 2001. The 6-1, 210-pound athlete with a 4.3-second 40 time is now at Hutchinson Community College getting his academics in order and preparing to further his career in Lincoln.

**5. Chijioke Onyenegha, CB (San Francisco, Calif.)** — The 6-3, 205-pound Onyenegha has been timed in 10.28 seconds in the 100-meter dash. The athlete from San Francisco City College has offers from a host of big time college powers, including Nebraska, Oregon, Oregon State, Washington, Kansas State and Washington State.

**6. Xavier Lawson-Kennedy, DT (Duncanville, Texas)** — The 6-3, 305-pound Kennedy is rated as the second best defensive tackle in the country by Rivals.com, and he has the offers to prove it. Kennedy claims offers from more than 50 schools, and Nebraska is thought to be in his top 10.

**7. Kyle Caldwell, DE (Scottsdale, Ariz.)** — Caldwell is rated by most recruiting services as the No. 1 player in Arizona for 2002. The 6-4, 255-pound pass rusher plans to visit Nebraska sometime this fall.

**8. Isaiah Thomas, DT (Belews Creek, N.C.)** — Thomas is a major college prospect on both sides of the line, but most of his attention is coming for his defensive exploits. The 6-3, 300-pounder is entertaining offers from a host of the nation's finest college programs, including the Huskers.

**9. Lorenzo Simms, CB (Fresno, Calif.)** — The 5-11, 180-pound Simms is rated as the 14th best cornerback prospect in the country by Rivals.com. Simms has already narrowed his field of suitors down to four, with Nebraska, LSU, Colorado, and USC making his final list.

**10. Chad Green, CB (Van Nuys, Calif.)** — Green is regarded as one of the top defensive backs in California. The 6-foot, 175-pound cover corner with a 4.4-second 40 time has Nebraska in his early top five, along with LSU, Oregon State, Washington, and Arizona State. ■

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has targeted Soi as one of its top priorities and currently stands as his favorite. However, Soi likes the Huskers, too, and intends to visit Lincoln as one of his five official visits.

"Right now, I have two set up," he said. "I'm going to USC for their game against Notre Dame in November. I'm also scheduled to go to Nebraska sometime during the football season, but I don't know if I want to go to that one. Most likely, I'll probably do it in December or January. I'm very interested in them. I've already told them that. I'd go there. It's a great school, but I'm not sure yet."

Soi has already been contacted by the Husker staff and likes what he's heard so far.

"I like Coach Brown a lot. He's a really nice man," Soi said. "I like their academic tradition a lot, too. Manaia Brown went there."

"I've talked with Coach Solich before, and he seems like a really nice guy, too. Everybody hears about Nebraska and their tradition. Everybody is scared when they hear 'Nebraska.'"

Distance will play a small role in Soi's decision, though he considers Lincoln close enough to at least warrant serious consideration.

"I want to be relatively near my family," he said. "I don't want to go really far east to school, like Florida or Tennessee. Nebraska and Colorado are okay. That would be about as far east as I would want to go, though."

Soi said he also wants to take a hard look at academics.

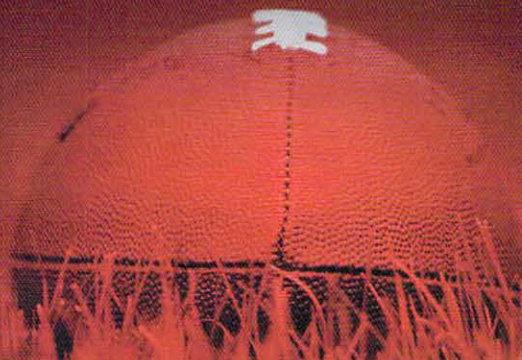
"I want to major in criminology," he said. "I also want to have a good relationship with the coaches. I want to play for a player's kind of coach — a coach that doesn't start a player because he's a senior but because of how good he is."

Soi is a member of the Church of Latter-day Saints and, like many Mormon athletes, has contemplated taking a mission at some point during his college football career. However, he has yet to make a decision in that regard.

"I really don't know yet," he said, in reference to taking a mission. "I'd like to have that option. Most of the schools recruiting me have told me they'd wait if I want to do that." ■

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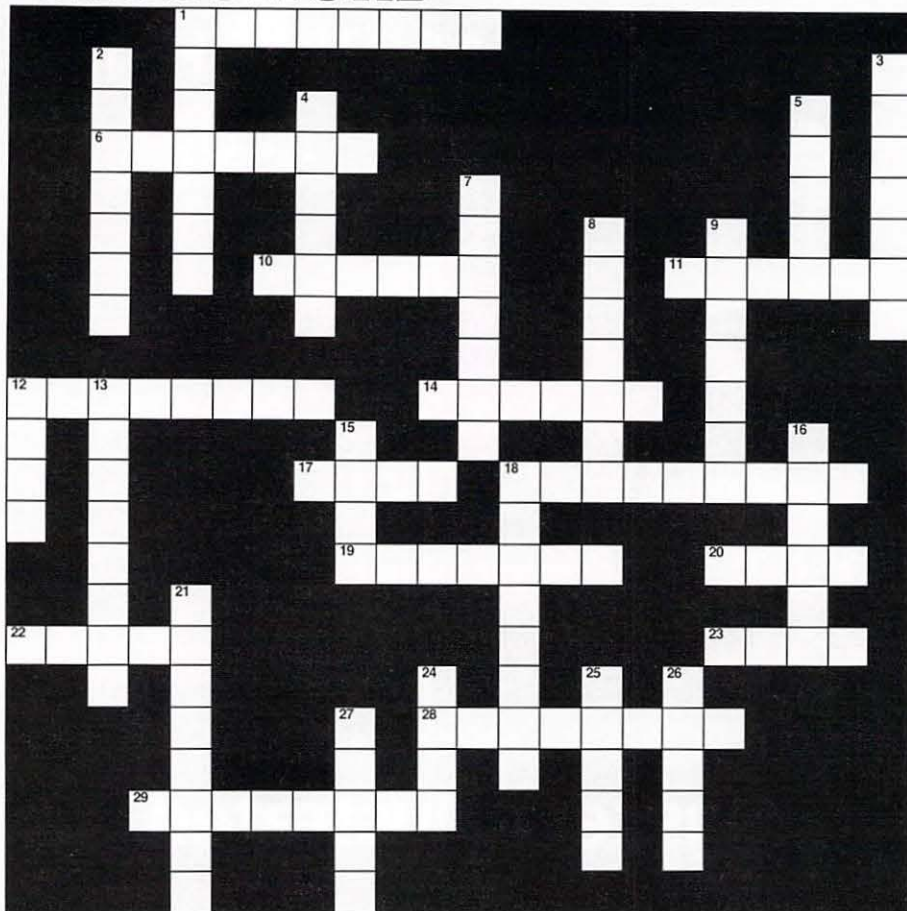
## ACROSS

- 1 NU has had 250 straight
- 6 NU's No. 2 career receiver
- 10 First career catch went for TD vs. Utah State
- 11 NU's No. 3 career receiver
- 12 Iowa State nickname
- 14 NU's Nov. 9 opponent
- 17 NU's last bowl game
- 18 Memorial Stadium playing surface
- 19 1992 Outland Trophy winner
- 20 NU's No. 38 (defense)
- 22 2001 national champion
- 23 NU linebackers coach
- 28 Iowa State head coach
- 29 NU's leading tackler vs. Utah State

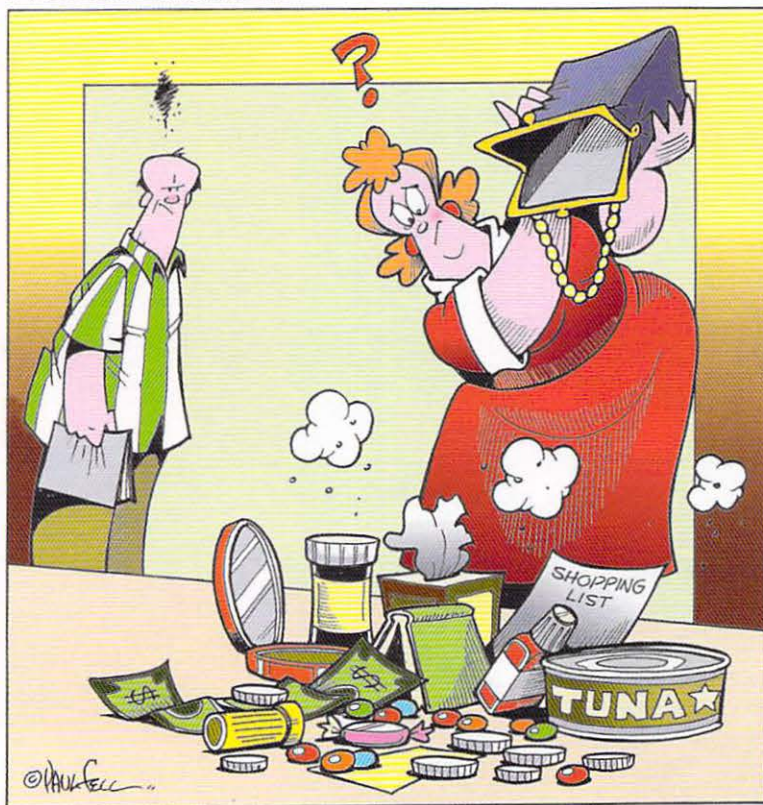
## DOWN

- 1 NU's No. 54 (defense)
- 2 NU's No. 1 career receiver
- 3 McNeese State's nickname
- 4 NU's No. 1 career rusher
- 5 NU's No. 2 career rusher
- 7 NU's No. 59 (defense)
- 8 Iowa State quarterback
- 9 1994 Outland Trophy winner
- 12 NU's No. 59 (offense)
- 13 NU's holder
- 15 NU's No. 22 (offense)
- 16 NU's No. 3 career rusher
- 18 Frank Solich's college position
- 21 NU's leading rusher vs. Utah State
- 24 Iowa State campus location
- 25 Iowa State playing surface
- 26 NU's Nov. 2 opponent
- 27 Ex-Husker on Iowa State staff

Answers in Oct. 5 issue



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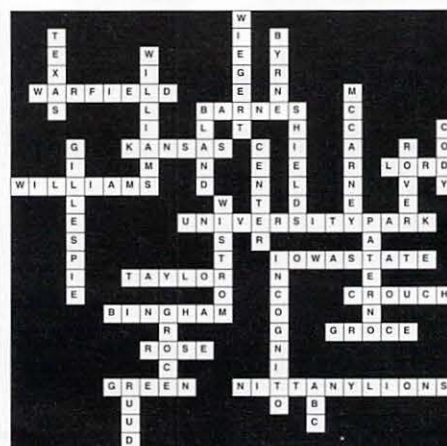
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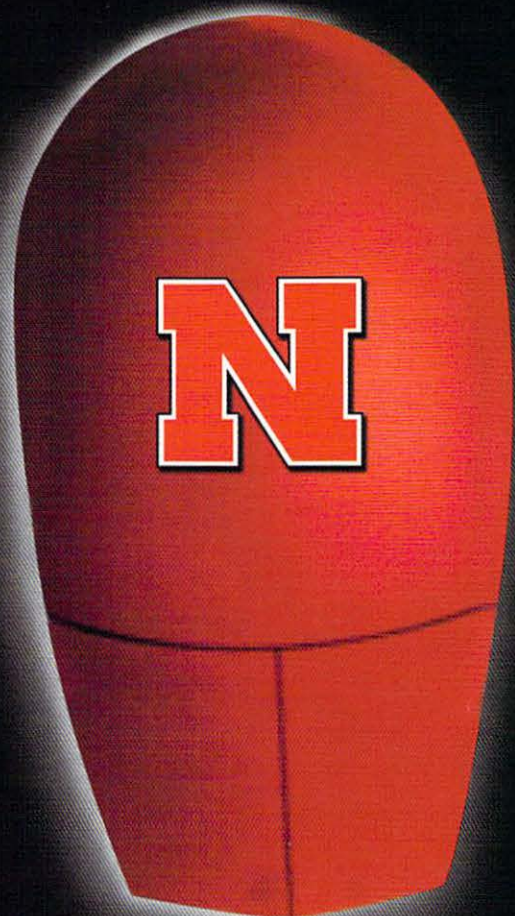
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# Worst Nightmare

*Players say they'll use shocking loss as a learning tool and move on*



**Mike BABCOCK**

LET'S SEE if we can find something positive in Nebraska's 40-7 loss at Penn State, something on which the Cornhuskers can build as they prepare to open Big 12 play at Iowa State.

It'll take just a minute while we sort through the statistics.

Checking.

Still checking.

Nope.

We're going to have to look elsewhere, recent history perhaps.

OK, how about this? Nebraska hasn't lost a conference opener since 1974.

Or how about this? The Cornhuskers haven't lost back-to-back regular-season games since 1976.

Feeling any better now? Didn't think so.

What happened in Happy Valley was, in its own way, a repeat of what happened at Colorado last season. The only difference was, Nebraska didn't give up as many points.

But then it didn't score as many, either. And the final margin was greater.

Nebraska hasn't lost that badly since 1990, 45-10 at Oklahoma.

What happened at Beaver Stadium was Nebraska's worst nightmare, telecast to three-quarters of the nation by ABC. It couldn't be done in relative obscurity.

What happened was inexplicable, an aberration — except that we already used aberration to describe the Colorado game. And aberrations shouldn't occur so close to one another. The Cornhuskers have to prove those two games were aberrations. And suddenly that's looking difficult.

"I think you need to look at how resounding we got beat, and look at ways to put things back together," said Coach Frank Solich. "As tough as it will be to put it behind them, they'll have to do it."

There was a time when Iowa State would be the tonic for such a whipping. But not anymore. The Cyclones rallied from a 24-7 halftime deficit to win at Iowa 36-31.

It would appear that the Cyclones are for real.

And now, they will turn their attention to Nebraska, in a game that has been marked on their schedule in bold letters. Plus, Seneca Wallace is a better quarterback than Zack Mills, a scary thought.

"We'll keep our composure," rush end and co-captain Chris Kelsay said.

The Cornhuskers didn't, however, during the game. Offensive tackle Richie Incognito was ejected for fighting after Penn State's Rich Gardner returned an interception 42 yards for a touchdown late in the third quarter to seal the deal.

Incognito's ejection was part of a learning process,

according to center and co-captain John Garrison. "But you don't want him to learn the hard way," Garrison said.

Garrison's confidence was unshaken.

"Credit Penn State," he said. "But I don't feel beaten."

Like Garrison, other Cornhuskers who came to the small post-game interview room talked about the need to learn from the experience. "We've got to use this as a learning tool," said Kelsay.

"We've got a long season; it's not down the drain," cornerback and co-captain DeJuan Groce said. "We're going to learn a lot. It's only one game. It's not over with."

"We've still got some games (in which) we can prove our point."

The defense can still prove its quality, according to Groce.

Though the players maintain they have set last season's losses to Colorado and Miami aside, not everyone outside the program has. "We knew coming in, each and every game counted," said Kelsay, "that we had to make sure something like that didn't happen again. But tonight it happened."

Penn State gained 476 total yards, averaging 6.4 per play. The Nittany Lions converted nine-of-15 third-down situations, committed only three penalties and didn't turn over the ball.

They were relatively error-free, in contrast to Nebraska.

"There's not a great deal to say, other than it was a poor performance," Solich said.

The kicker in all of this is that Penn State might not be as good as it looked, or as good as the Cornhuskers might have made it look. The Nittany Lions are coming off back-to-back losing seasons, and there have been rumblings that the game may have passed Coach Joe Paterno by.

After all, Penn State escaped with a 27-24 victory against Central Florida in its opener two weeks ago.

No one on the Nebraska sideline would have questioned Penn State's potential, however. "There weren't a lot of surprises," said Solich. "They have shown the ability to operate as they did."

The Cornhuskers, on the other hand, hadn't shown signs of such vulnerability. "I thought we had improved as we went through our first three ball games," Solich said.

But the Penn State loss offered evidence to the contrary. Solich didn't single out any one aspect of his team's play. Nebraska had problems in the kicking game as well as on offense and defense. "We really failed in all phases," he said.

There really wasn't anything positive to discuss. ■



Nebraska's fans didn't have much to cheer about.

**Mike Babcock** is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for more than 20 years. Mike can be reached at MumblyDog@aol.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.

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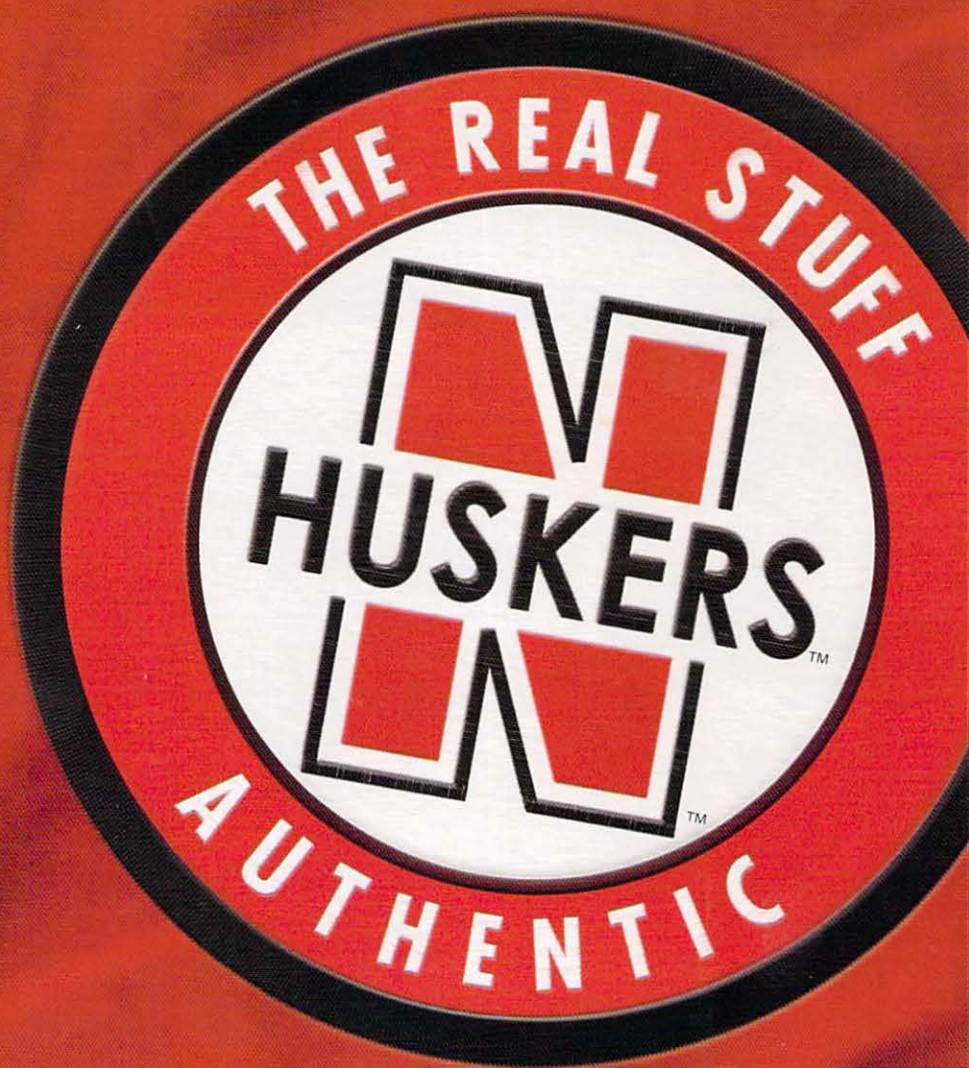
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